

Iraq exports 120 million barrels of oil

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq has exported 120 million barrels of crude oil since a U.N. oil-for-food deal came into effect in December. Oil Minister Amer Mohammad Rashid announced Friday. "Up to May 30 Iraq has exported 120 million barrels of crude, representing a total of 21 contracts," Mr. Rashid told a press conference here. He said Iraq exported 54 million barrels in the first three months after the U.N. accord came into effect on Dec. 10, and 66 million barrels in the next three months. Under U.N. Resolution 986, Iraq can sell \$2 billion of oil every six months under tight international control to raise money for food and medicine.

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Security minister declares Israel plans to keep half of West Bank

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

(AFP) — Israel wants to keep control of half of the West Bank under a final peace deal with the Palestinians, Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani said Friday. "Whatever else is in this accord, the Jordan Valley must remain under Israeli control to prevent any contact between Jordan and the Palestinian entity," Mr. Kahalani told Israel Radio. Otherwise, he said, it would be impossible to prevent Arab armies from entering Palestinian-controlled territory on the West Bank which would pose a "fatal threat" to Israel. He said Israel "must keep control of half of the West Bank within the framework of a final accord" with the Palestinians. Mr. Kahalani, who is seen as a leading moderate in Israel's right-wing coalition government, also condemned the autonomy accords signed by the former Labour government with the Palestine Libera-

tion Organisation (PLO).

"These accords are unachievable and gave the Palestinians inflated hopes," he said. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his cabinet launched discussions Wednesday on their position for so-called "final status" talks with the Palestinians, which are to lead to a peace settlement by May 1999. The Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported Thursday that Mr. Netanyahu plans to offer Palestinians control over only 40 per cent of the West Bank. It published what it called a "secret map" drawn up by Mr. Netanyahu which would annex or maintain Israeli control over at least 60 per cent of the West Bank including most Jewish settlements. Israel would also maintain sovereignty over Arab east Jerusalem. Mr. Netanyahu said Thursday his government's position on the final status question had not been set

but stopped short of denying the Haaretz report outright.

"I have drawn up no map, but I have one in mind," he said. "Government discussions on the final status have only just begun." Palestinians demand a full Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied in 1967 and they reacted angrily to the Haaretz report. "This smells of disaster," said chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat. "It is not only insulting, but it will keep the Israeli-Palestinian conflict alive." Currently, Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has full control over just eight main towns in the West Bank, about three per cent of the territory, plus 60 per cent of the Gaza Strip. Interim peace accords called for the two sides to begin negotiations on a final settlement for the occupied areas last year, but the talks were put on hold following Mr. Netanyahu's election.

Israeli minister says peace deal 'mistake'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israel's internal security minister said on Friday the landmark 1993 peace deal with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was a "fundamental mistake". Avigdor Kahalani, seen as a moderate in the current government, labelled a "disaster" the fact the government had to try to implement a deal "it did not believe in" which was hammered out by a prior administration. Regarding the framework 1993 peace accord reached at Oslo between the PLO and Israel's previous, dovish government which set up Palestinian self-rule and set parameters for final peace talks, Mr. Kahalani said: "I think the Oslo agreement, all the signing of that, was a fundamental mistake. "I think it is a disaster from the point of view that this government must implement something that it does not believe in, and I think also the prior government, if it had to implement the Oslo agreement, would not have been able to." The prior government, ousted in elections a year ago, handed over much of the Gaza strip and seven West Bank cities to the PNA. Mr. Netanyahu, after months of acrimonious talks, handed over part of another town under a deal cut by the prior government. More than two million Palestinians live in Arab east Jerusalem, the rest of the West Bank and Gaza, occupied by Israel in 1967.

All negotiations between the two sides have been frozen since mid-March when Mr. Netanyahu

ordered construction to begin on a settlement in occupied Arab east Jerusalem.

Iraqi Kurd group says Turkish jets killed nine

ANKARA (R) — An Iraqi Kurdish faction said on Friday that Turkish jets bombed areas under its control near the Iranian border, killing nine people and injuring five in their incursion against rebel separatist Kurds. "Six Turkish jets attacked the areas of Bote, Warte and Dole-Khanaga ... (that) resulted in the death of seven civilians and two PUK Peshmerga (fighters)," the Patriotic Union Of Kurdistan (PUK) said in a statement faxed to Reuters. Thousands of Turkish troops, backed by air power, poured into northern Iraq on May 14 in pursuit of separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) rebels who use the region as a base to launch raids into southeast Turkey. The PUK statement said there were no PKK bases in its territory and called on Turkey to cease its opera-

tions in the Kurdish-held region. "The attack casts serious doubts on the neutrality of Turkey in the peace process," it said, referring to Ankara's role as mediator between PUK and the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) to forge a permanent peace in northern Iraq. Turkish officials were not immediately available for comment. Turkey said earlier it launched the operation to help KDP forces fighting PKK rebels to root them out from northern Iraq. More than 24,000 people have died in the PKK's insurgency, launched in August of 1984. NATO-member Turkey's Western allies and countries in the Middle East have demanded the troops withdraw from the enclave, a "safe haven" for Iraqi Kurds set up by the West since the Gulf War ended in 1991.

Turkey has rebuffed the demands, protesting at alleged Iranian and Syrian support for the rebels and saying the military offensive is only aimed at PKK rebel bases. Turkish troops consolidated their hold on parts of northern Iraq on Thursday in the cross-border operation, state-run Anatolian News Agency reported. Journalists have been barred from the region, making independent reporting impossible. The Turkish army says it has killed 1,817 PKK guerrillas during the operation in Iraq. Rebel sources say these figures are inflated, and PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan has put the rebel death toll at 30. Turkey mounted a six-week, 35,000-man operation in northern Iraq two years ago but failed to achieve its stated aim of crushing the PKK.

Turkish ruling coalition in minority as another True Path deputy resigns

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey's Islamist-led ruling coalition sunk deeper into crisis Friday as another True Path deputy announced his resignation to leave the government in a minority, amid warnings of further defections early next week. Yildirim Aktuna became the fifth deputy of Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller's True Path to quit in the space of a week, as opposition within the party to its alliance with the pro-Islamist Welfare Party of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan grows. His resignation brings the number of seats controlled by True Path to 116. The coalition now has 275 of the 550 seats in the parliament — one short of an absolute majority. However, the government can still count on the support of the extreme-right Grand Union Party which has seven seats. The government last week narrowly escaped an opposition-launched

motion thanks to Grand Union's support. Mr. Aktuna accused the Islamic party of "politicising religion" and of "trying to alter the fundamental principles of the republic of Turkey." He warned that other true path deputies could resign Monday or Tuesday among those who voted against the government in the censure motion. Responding to the growing pressure on the party, some 40,000 Welfare supporters attended a rally Thursday evening in an Istanbul sports stadium on the 544th anniversary of the capture of the city — then known as Constantinople — by the Ottomans. "Only we are capable of filling this stadium," Mr. Erbakan told enthusiastic supporters. The conservative main opposition Motherland Party has already announced that it will introduce a fresh censure motion next week in an effort to

bring down the government, and Turkey's leading business and labour groups announced Wednesday they would stage strikes and rallies until the government quits. Ms. Ciller is pushing for early elections to resolve the current political crisis, but the coalition partners failed to reach agreement on the issue during talks Thursday. The uncertainty over the government's future comes amid a bitter row between Welfare and the powerful and pro-secular Turkish military over creeping Islamisation. The army on Monday expelled more than 100 Islamist officers, and Mr. Erbakan ratified the move in an effort to avoid further confrontation with the military commanders. Last Thursday, the constitutional court began legal proceedings for a trial against Mr. Erbakan's party, which could end with the closure of welfare.

Somali warlords agree to talk on end to civil war

CAIRO (AP) — Leaders of Somalia's two main factions agreed Thursday to an immediate ceasefire and to start peace talks to end the civil war that has ravaged their African nation since 1991. Hussein Aideded and Ali Mahdi Mohammad made the announcement to reporters in Cairo after meeting Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, whose country has been involved in search for a peace settlement in Somalia. "I am confident that the

great Somali people will support these efforts to restore national unity in Somalia," said Mr. Aideded, leader of the most powerful faction in Somalia. Also in Cairo, the 22-member Arab League, which has attempted to mediate between the warring factions, praised the agreement and said it would give a "strong push to the efforts exerted to achieve national reconciliation in Somalia."

U.N. attacked after vehicles turn up in occupied zone

TYRE (AP) — Lebanese guerrillas shot at and roughed up U.N. Peace keepers on Friday following reports they sold scrap vehicles to Israelis. Pro-Iranian Hizbollah gunmen stopped a water truck and another vehicle belonging to the Irish contingent of U.N. peacekeepers near the southern Lebanese village of Kafra, said a U.N. officer, speaking on customary condition of anonymity. The gunmen pulled the soldiers out of their cars, forced them to lie on the

ground and then smashed their wireless equipment, the officer added. "They accused the U.N. of selling vehicles to the Israelis," said the officer. After releasing the soldiers, the gunmen fired 20 rounds at the vehicles as they drove off. The vehicles were not hit and none of the occupants was injured. The United Nations said peace keepers were also roughed up on Thursday when guerrillas intercepted two Polish soldiers near the

Yemen keen to settle border row with Saudi Arabia

SANAA (R) — Yemen's new government vowed on Thursday to do its utmost to settle a 61-year-old border row with Saudi Arabia. "My government will continue sincere work to reach a just and acceptable settlement to demarcate borders with Saudi Arabia to guarantee peace and stability in the region," Prime Minister Faraj Said Ben Ghanem said in a speech outlining his government's programme to the newly-elected parliament. "The new government stresses its keenness to boost Yemen's ties with neighbouring states, especially with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and countries in the African Horn."

Saleh last month appointed Mr. Ben Ghanem, a Polish-educated independent economist from southern Yemen, to head a new government after the April 27 elections, the first since 1994 civil war nearly tore the country apart. The 301-member chamber, in which Mr. Saleh's ruling party holds the majority of seats, will debate the government's programme before voting on it in the next weeks. The impoverished Arab state and oil-rich Saudi Arabia signed a memorandum of understanding in 1995 to resolve their border dispute. A joint committee looking into border demarcation has met scores of



His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan talk upon the Prince's arrival at Marka Airport, Friday. The Crown Prince was on a working trip to Italy and the United Kingdom aiming to promote Jordan's causes (Petra photo)

Crown Prince back home; trip focused on furthering relations

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — "Soft security," "anthropopolitics," inter and intra-regional cooperation, as well as inter-faith dialogue were the leit-motifs characterising His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan's European working trip he concluded yesterday. As opposed to "hard security," which entails the use of force, the "soft" or "flexible" security, the Crown Prince has called for in his talks with Italian and British top officials is "a suitable regional environment in which no state feels threatened."

In his meeting with British Foreign Secretary Robert Cook last week, the Crown Prince stressed the need for a broader humanitarian approach to security issues, and in the annual Denning lecture he delivered at the International Student House in London on Wednesday, he renewed his call for "a remodelling of policies which ensure the promotion of 'politics where people matter,' or 'anthropopolitics.'"

The status of Jerusalem and inter-faith dialogue as a means to mutual understanding and comprehensive and lasting peace were also the focus of talks between Prince Hassan and Mons. Jean-Louis Tauran, secretary of state for international relations at the Vatican. Among the immediate practical results of the Crown Prince's recent visits, the Italian government's promise to swap part of Jordan's debt, and Mr. Cook's assurance that Britain's newly elected Labour government will "make sure that the long historic ties [between Jordan and the UK] will continue."

Israeli troops clash with Palestinians in Bethlehem

BETHLEHEM (AFP) — Israeli troops fired tear gas and rubber bullets in a clash with some 200 Palestinians Friday after a protest in the West Bank town of Bethlehem erupted into violence. The Palestinians broke through a cordon set up by their own police to hurl stones at soldiers guarding a Jewish holy site on the edge of the Palestinian-controlled town. They were driven back by the soldiers firing tear gas and rubber bullets. Earlier, around 1,000 demonstrators gathered in Bethlehem's central square to protest the death of a

Palestinian prisoner, who was beaten in an Israeli hospital, and the arrest of a Muslim cleric with links to Hamas. In a speech to the rally, Palestinian Deputy Salah Tamari accused those responsible for prisoner Khaled Abu Diya's death of "behaving like Nazis" and demanded an independent inquiry. Some of the crowd then marched through the streets shouting "Mohammad's army is coming" and "long live Izzedin Al Qassam, the armed wing of Hamas. Abu Diya of Bethlehem, arrested by Israel for trying

to take a soldier's gun, died in a Jerusalem hospital last week after being beaten by police and hospital security who said they were trying to subdue him. On Wednesday, Israel further infuriated Bethlehem residents by seizing preacher Abdul Mujid Alia as he passed by the Israeli-guarded Rachel's Tomb on the edge of the town. Palestinian security sources said Sheikh Alia was close to the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and had been arrested three times previously by Israeli security.



A Palestinian policeman is evacuated by his comrades after he was overcome by teargas fired by Israeli troops at Palestinians on Friday (Reuters photo)

Palestinian leaders call for democratic rule in self-rule areas, urge PNA to coordinate with other Arab countries

WASHINGTON (USIS) — Several Palestinian leaders speaking here at the annual conference of the Centre for Policy Analysis on Palestine (CPAP) called for the establishment of democracy in the self-rule areas of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

They also urged the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to coordinate with other Arab countries, especially Syria, to strengthen its position in negotiations with the recalcitrant Israeli government of Benjamin Netanyahu.

On the other hand, there was disagreement on the next steps in the stalled peace negotiations between Israel and the PNA. Some favoured suspension of the negotiations, while others, recognising that the Oslo accords have yielded important gains for the Palestinians, like international recognition, wanted to work through the system.

The leader of the Palestine delegation to the opening of the Middle East peace conference in Madrid in 1991 and later head of its negotiating team in Washington, Haidar Abdul Shafi, declared that the Palestinian people "continue to be committed to the principle of peace in sincerity and seriousness."

Recognising that the Palestinians are in for "a difficult and protracted struggle," the elderly Palestinian leader said he favoured suspending negotiations at this time and "conditioning their resumption on Israeli official and open recognition of our basic and innate rights."

However, he stressed, there is an immediate need to put the Palestinian house in order. "We have been suffering from chronic disorder, and so things have been drifting to the worse."

The best way to achieve order is by "adopting and practising democracy," he continued, "only then can we make prudent decisions."

Abdul Shafi, a physician and member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, warned that the present Israeli position is "a clear invitation to fighting, and, if not abandoned, it will eventually lead to fighting and bloodshed."

Repeating a theme that was heard from several speakers at the all-day conference on May 28 for renewed Palestinian-Arab coordination, Dr. Shafi, who lives in Gaza, added that the destinies of Palestinians and other Arabs are "intertwined" and the best guard for their future and permanent security in the Middle East against "Zionist expansion is a Palestinian state on Palestinian soil."

Another prominent Palestinian, who was a delegate to the multilateral peace negotiations on refugees, Salim Tamari, underlined the differences between Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and elsewhere.

Mr. Tamari, who is now a visiting professor at Cornell University, said the differences lie in the fact that those at home see the Oslo accords as a "transitional" regime while the others believe it is "a final arrangement" and thereby a "betrayal."

Mustapha Barghouti, the driving force behind non-governmental organisations agitating for democratic practices, lamented the disintegration of Palestinian national movement, and the fragmentation of the Palestinian areas into three disconnected regions: the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem.

He also expressed disappointment with the absence of international support for democracy within the Palestinian self-rule areas.

CPAP's annual conference, titled "Oslo's Final Status and the Future of the Middle East," marked the 20th anniversary of the founding of its mother organisation, the Jerusalem Fund for Education and Community Development.

ment, a non-profit and tax-exempt institution. Representative Jim P. Moran, a Democrat from Northern Virginia, was a featured guest at the conference dinner.

Ten prominent Americans and five organisations were honoured for their "extraordinary efforts on behalf of justice for and the human rights of the Palestinian people." Among the individuals were former senators James Abourezk, George McGovern and Charles Percy as well as former Representative Paul Findley.

The honoured institutions were the American Friends Service Committee, Americans for Middle East Understanding, the Christian Science Monitor, Foundation for Middle East Peace, and Middle East Report and Information Project.

Since its founding in 1977, the Jerusalem Fund said in a press release, under its scholarship programme some 8,000 scholarships worth over \$4 million were given to Palestinian university students in Israel and the West Bank. It also gave direct assistance to educational, cultural, medical and community institutions, and granted emergency relief during and after the intifada or Palestinian uprising in 1987.

A co-founder and chairman of the Jerusalem Fund, Hisham Sharabi began the day's event with the sombre remark: "Even if a peace agreement were signed, it is not likely to lead to a lasting settlement nor to bring an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict."

He thought that a "genuine and lasting" settlement could have been possible had the peace negotiations been carried out with "a different spirit and in a different negotiating framework." His preferred model was the negotiations between the African National Congress and the all-white South African government, where the settlement was based on "full equality, mutual

recognition and reconciliation."

A genuine reconciliation entails, according to Dr. Sharabi, who is professor of intellectual history at Georgetown University, "as a first step defining victimhood and finding out how Palestinians and Israelis have both become victims." Admittedly, he added, this is not an easy task.

He then urged that Palestinians in the Diaspora to consider the survival and the well-being of Palestinians inside Palestine as "crucial to the survival of Palestinians everywhere." He added: "A strong healthy, and well-educated Palestinian community in Palestine is the ultimate guarantee of a national future for Palestinians wherever they are."

He called on the Palestinian-American community to put together an umbrella organisation that will seek a "workable coalition" with Arab and Muslim Americans in order to "become possible for the first time to play a meaningful role in domestic American politics."

He concluded his remarks by asking: "Is there any reason why the political power now enjoyed by the Jewish-American community, accomplished in the lifetime of a single generation, should be beyond the reach of a vigorous and rapidly growing American, Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim community in the next ten to twenty years?"

Rep. Moran gave a scathing attack against Israeli policies in Jerusalem, saying that the "hypocritical and prejudicial" policies of the Israeli government of Mr. Netanyahu are "unworthy of having, say, 'emblem' over Jerusalem, which, he thought, should be governed 'jointly by giving all God's people equal voice, equal power and equal dignity."



Palestinian men on Friday pray on their village land confiscated by Israel for the construction of a new water tower which they believe will be the start of a new settlement. The villagers blame the United States for not preventing Israeli expansion of settlements in the West Bank (Reuters photo)

Palestinian harassed after complaining of son's torture — human rights group

BETHLEHEM, West Bank (AFP) — A Palestinian was harassed after he publicly complained that his son was tortured by Palestinian security men, a human rights group said Friday.

Shokat Salah was detained for the first time Wednesday at the Bethlehem police station and released several hours later. He was held again on Thursday and freed

that night without questioning.

On Friday he was summoned again, the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group said.

Police behaviour is a type "of bureaucratic intimidation to punish him for having spoken out," the group's director, Bassem Eid, told AFP.

The Palestinian police denied that they arrested

Salah on those grounds. A report Monday by the human rights group on the use of torture by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) mentioned Salah's son's case.

Ahmad, 25, was one of nine residents of the village Al Khader outside Bethlehem arrested in mid-1996 on charges of murdering the village mukhtar, or headman.

The nine confessed to the

mukhtar's and other murders despite evidence they could not have possibly committed the murders, all because of torture," Mr. Eid said.

"If they told you to confess to killing Moses, you would say, 'I killed Moses,'" said Shokat Salah.

He told AFP his son had been sodomised and electrical wires inserted in his genitalia during interrogation.

Azhar recommends seizure of 'anti-Islamic' books

CAIRO (AFP) — Al Azhar, Sunni Islam's highest authority, has recommended the confiscation of three books recently published in Egypt because they "criticise the prophet" and undermine Islam, officials said on Thursday.

Two of the Arabic-language books were written by Khalil Abdul Karim — author and member of the Egyptian opposition Tagammu Party — and deal with relations between men and women in early Islamic society and the relations between the Prophet Muhammad and his followers.

The other book, by Al Azhar University Professor Ahmad Sobhi Mansur, deals with the "hisba," Muslims' right to take to court anyone they believe is violating Islamic law.

"The recommendation (to confiscate) the books was taken at the end of last week because these books criticise the prophet and his followers," an Al Azhar spokesman said. He declined to elaborate.

The recommendation was

made to the censorship board which in turn will refer it to the judicial system which will decide whether or not to seize the books.

Author Mohammad Farag dismissed the move as a "return to the inquisition" and described Al Azhar's recommendation as "dictatorship because it is against freedom of thought."

The Egyptian press and Al Azhar University professors denounced Abdul Karim's book "Mujtama' Yahreb" (The Society of Yathreb) when it went on sale in April, accusing the author of defaming the followers of Prophet Muhammad.

Abdul Karim told AFP he was not aware of any recommendation to confiscate his books.

A Cairo court on Sunday sentenced Egyptian author Alaa Hamed to one year in prison and seized three of his books, accusing him of attacking religion and publishing pornographic material.

Israel navy detains Lebanese fishermen

TYRE (AFP) — The Israeli navy detained on Friday for six hours two Lebanese fishermen off the coast of south Lebanon where it has maintained a sea blockade since a guerrilla suicide attack last week.

Brothers Mohammad Shaaban, 45, and Abdullah Shaaban, 36, were ordered off their boat about a kilometre off the southern port city of Tyre at 4:00 a.m. (0100 GMT), security sources said.

Mohammad Bawwab, president of the Tyre Fishermen's Union, told AFP that the Shaaban brothers were ordered by Israeli officers through a loud speaker to jump into the water and swim toward their navy gunboat.

"The two fishermen were forced to swim in their clothes, in the freezing water in the dawn winds, for 200 metres until they reached the Israeli boat," Mr. Bawwab said.

They were released after

six hours of interrogation by Israeli navy officers on the number of fishing boats in Tyre and whether last week's suicide attack was launched from the city's port, he said.

The Israeli navy has imposed the blockade since May 19 when a member of the pro-Syrian Amal Movement tried to sink a gunboat off Tyre by launching a suicide attack in a fishing boat loaded with explosives.

But the fishing boat exploded and the guerrilla was killed when the Israeli gunboat launched a pre-emptive missile strike.

Friday at dawn, two Israeli gunboats fired machine-gun rounds near the Tyre coast to prevent fishermen from sailing off the city's port.

Amal, which is led by Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, plays a minor role in the guerrilla war spearheaded by the Iranian-backed Hizbollah to force Israeli troops out of a buffer strip in southern Lebanon.

Israel fears Egypt may become enemy again

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Egypt could become an enemy of Israel again if the crisis in the Middle East peace process gets much worse, according to a report by Israeli intelligence services quoted by the press on Friday.

Although Egypt is bound by its 1979 peace treaty with Israel, the strengthening of its army with U.S.-made weapons is boosting its confidence and "could constitute a threat to Israel in certain circumstances," said the report quoted in the daily Yediot Aharanot.

This is most likely if the Israeli-Palestinian autonomy accords collapse completely and if the Israeli army moves back into

Palestinian self-ruled areas, the report said.

According to Yediot Aharanot, the head of Israel's military intelligence Moshe Yaalon has accused Egyptian leaders of facing both ways by refusing to opt for either peace or war.

"Egypt needs a psychiatrist," General Yaalon told an internal army meeting, according to an unnamed political official quoted by the newspaper.

The general reportedly said Egypt had not yet committed to either the policy of peace set out by President Anwar Sadat or the hostile policy of his predecessor Jamal Abdul Nasser.

However, an army spokesman denied the report. "It is absolutely false. The head of military intelligence has not said such things at any forum at any time," he said.

Egypt, the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel, is leading mediation efforts to overcome the latest crisis in the peace process by getting Israelis and Palestinians back to the negotiating table.

The Palestinians walked out of talks after Israel began work in mid-March on a new settlement in Arab east Jerusalem, and insist they will not return until the Jewish state freezes all settlement

building.

However, Israel's hard-line Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has refused to do so.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said Wednesday he saw little grounds for optimism in getting the peace process moving again.

"The problem of (Jewish) settlements remains the main obstacle in the peace process and Israeli-Palestinian negotiations," Mr. Musa said, a day after a summit between Mr. Netanyahu and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:35French Programmes
16:00Gillente World Sport Special
16:30Doc. — Innovations
16:50Tili
17:15Drama — Blue Heelers
18:00French Programmes
19:00News in French
19:30News Headlines
19:35 Comedy — Hangin' With Mr. Cooper
20:00Magazine Zero One
22:00News in English
22:25MacGyver
23:15Feature film

PRAYER TIMES

15:54Fajr
05:26(Sunrise) Duha
12:33Dhuhr
16:14Asr
19:40Maghreb
21:13Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440.

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De la Salle Church Tel. 661656.
Terra Sancta Church Tel.
622366
Church of the Annunciation
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Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church
Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church
Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel.
771751.
Armenian International Church
Tel. 827126
Evangelical Lutheran Church
Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932.
Church of Nazareth Tel.
675691.
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
684496.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department
of Meteorology
Mild weather conditions will
prevail with temperatures dropping

to become slightly below average and winds southwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman16/26
Aqaba23/34
Deserts13/30
Jordan Valley21/33

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 29 Aqaba 36 Humidity
readings: Amman 30 per cent.
Aqaba 24 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Mukhlis Halaseh5519220
Dr. Fadi Al Khatib865456
Dr. Youssef Al Faqih790104
Dr. Rabi Sukkar856457
Firas pharmacy661912
Ferdows pharmacy778336
Al Asena pharmacy637055
Naironkh pharmacy623672
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yaroub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy637660
Najib pharmacy847632

IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir276852
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Rabah Al Bourini990312
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Department661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
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Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department630321
Hotel Complaints605800
Price Complaints661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111
Telephone Information (direct assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs661101

.....661101
Jordan Television773111
Radio Jordan774111
Water Authority680100
Jordan Electricity Authority815615
Electric Power Company636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre813813/352
Khalifeh Maternity, J. Amn644281/6
Aklifeh Maternity, J. Amn642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity642362
Malhas, J. Amman636140
Palestine, Shmeisani607071
Shmeisani Hospital669131
University Hospital845845
Al-Muasher Hospital667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajireen77101/3
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.....775111/26
Army, Marka891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital09983323
Zarqa National Hospital09900560
Ibn Sina Hospital09986732
Al Hikam Modern Hospital09990990

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:00Damascus (RJ)
10:05Aqaba (RJ)
10:30New Delhi (RJ)
10:45Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
11:05Beirut (RJ)
11:30Colombo (RJ)
15:40 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:20Cairo (RJ)
19:10London, Berlin (RJ)
20:40Vienna (RJ)
01:25Larnaca (RJ)
06:00Bangkok (RJ)
Other Flights
06:10Jakarta (GA)
07:05London, Damascus (BA)
13:00Riyadh (SV)
13:10Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
15:50Riyadh (SV)
15:50Vienna (OS)
19:25Dubai, Damascus (EK)
20:10London (GA)
21:10Paris, Damascus (AF)
23:25Beirut (ME)
23:45Amsterdam (KL)
01:00Cairo (MS)
02:15London (BA)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:20Beirut (RJ)
07:35Aqaba (add) (RJ)
12:05Vienna (RJ)
12:20Amsterdam, Chicago, Detroit (RJ)
12:35Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:45Paris (RJ)
13:00Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
13:15Cairo (RJ)
14:00London (RJ)
15:00Brussels (RJ)
21:05Riyadh, Dhahran (BA)
21:15Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:50Bombay (RJ)
22:00Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:10Larnaca (RJ)
Other Flights
04:00Rome (AZ)
06:50Larnaca (CY)
07:10Damascus, London (BA)
14:00 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
14:30Riyadh (SV)
20:15Vienna (OS)
20:15Dubai (EK)
23:55Damascus, Paris (AF)
00:25Amsterdam (KL)
02:00Cairo (MS)
04:00Athens (OA)
04:00Rome (AZ)
07:00Beirut (ME)

Professional unions reject government allowances

By Lola Kellani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The professional associations on Thursday rejected a government decision granting professionals allowances as of June describing the decision as a breach of a memorandum of understanding the two sides signed in October. "The government's decision to introduce overtime allowances for public health employees as of June 1, is a breach of the memorandum which stated that the employees will receive the allowances as of Jan. 1, 1997," said Bassem Dajani, president of the Jordan Medical Association (JMA).

The Cabinet on Tuesday decided to grant pharmacists a 100 per cent overtime allowance, nurses 75 per cent and veterinarians, doctors and dentists 60 per cent.

The government will start to pay these allowances on basic salaries as of June 1.

For the past two years, the JMA and other professional associations have been at odds with the government over the issue and have been urging it to "correct the injustices" of a 1988 Unified Allowances Law. Dr. Dajani told the Jordan Times in an earlier interview.

The memorandum, signed

between the professional associations and the previous government and endorsed by a Royal Decree issued in February, should have resolved the differences between the two parties, a JMA source said.

"The JMA is especially angry because the increase was included in the 1997 budget, and recommended by both ministers of health (in the outgoing and the current governments) Aref Baayneh and Ashraf Kurdi," said former member of the JMA board, Ja'far Hunedi. "The recommendations and agreement were not taken into consideration during the Cabinet meeting," he said.

The Cabinet decision, which caused a stir among the professional associations, also ignored the demands of other public sector employees, who are also members of other associations.

A statement issued by the associations Thursday said a ministerial committee and the associations last week agreed that a 120 per cent overtime allowance for engineers, agricultural engineers, journalists and geologists employed by the government, be discussed during the cabinet session.

Tuesday's Cabinet meeting, however, approved only allowances to public

health professionals. All other categories were not discussed.

Individual professional associations also issued statements claiming the Cabinet's decision a breach of the memorandum of understanding signed by each association independently.

The Jordan Dentist Association (JDA) demanded a 35 per cent increase in the overtime allowance based on the total salary and not the basic salary, the JDA statement said.

The Jordan Agricultural Engineers Association (JAEA) also issued a statement saying the government's decision to increase the overtime allowances for other associations excluding agricultural engineers will cause friction among the associations.

The associations, in their joint statement, called for a general assembly meeting of their federation to discuss whatever "measures" to take to press their cause.

Dr. Dajani refused to comment on the possible measures the public health sector intends to carry out but another JMA source told the Jordan Times that the protesters will hold a one-hour strike which could lead to an open strike unless the government honours agreement already reached.

Sister's killer gets three-month sentence

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Criminal Court Thursday sentenced a 24-year-old man to three months imprisonment after he was found guilty of murdering his married sister in the Azmi Mufti Refugees Camp in Irbid in March 1997.

Samir Farid, who pleaded not guilty to the charges of shooting his older sister Samira, 25, benefited from

a reduction in penalty because he committed the crime in a fit of fury to "cleanse his family's honour," the court ruled.

Mr. Farid first received a six-month prison term, which was immediately commuted by the court because the family of the victim dropped charges against their son.

According to court documents, 11 months prior to the murder Ms. Farid had a relation with a man and

became pregnant as a result. A month later she married the man, identified only as Ahmad Khalid, and the two had a baby girl in November, the court transcripts said.

On March 15, Ms. Farid, who had not seen her brother since she married, had a fight with her husband and went to her uncle's home. It added.

According to proceedings of the case, when the brother went to his uncle's house

and "while his sister was about to leave the house, he drew a gun and shot her four times in the head, heart and chest, then turned himself in to authorities."

In its ruling, the court, headed by Judge Mahmoud Bawadi and comprising Judges Ahmad Khatib and Mahmoud Khalaf, decided to amend the premeditated charges pressed against Mr. Farid by the prosecution, to manslaughter.

"Mr. Farid had not seen

his sister since she married, and he shot and killed her three minutes after seeing her on the morning of March 15, which means that he had not plotted to kill her as originally charged," the court said.

"His actions of shooting and killing his sister were committed in a fit of fury because his sister had slept with Mr. Khalid before marrying him," it added.

Women prepare for November elections

AMMAN (J.T.) — As election time draws nearer, efforts are intensifying to increase women's participation in the November parliamentary contest.

In cooperation with the European Union, the Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW), the Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW), and the Princess Basma Women's Resource Centre (PBWRC) are launching a programme entitled: "Empowerment of Jordanian women in leadership and decision-making." The programme will involve seminars, workshops and media activities, that aim at increasing grassroots participation in democracy.

Activities will include 126 seminars and lectures in all regions of the country. They will cover women's rights and the law, the election law, personal status law, citizen and passport law, labour law, criminal law, and income tax law.

The activities will reach some 10,000 women through 188 training sessions.

The project will also involve setting up a media unit at the PBWRC. The unit will be the first of its kind in Jordan and will provide media services to all women's groups and candidates until the November elections, with follow-up in the post-election phase.

The unit will provide consultations and technical services to women candidates and their campaign teams. The functions of the unit will also include providing daily summaries of election-related news, and a monthly newsletter covering the election build-up. Information will be made available at the unit on past elections, and current electoral listings.

The programme also aims at reaching a broad spectrum of Jordanian women, and women's non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Women's NGOs will be involved in legal seminars, which will focus on areas of concern related to the political and decision-making process, according to the respective priorities of the different groups. Topics will include the role of NGOs as pressure groups, as well as their role in enhancing the status of women.

The EU's support of this programme, and its cooperation with national machineries in such a venture, is a reflection of its commitment to the democratisation process, and part of its own Democracy Programme (MEDP).

The programme will span several months, from now until after the elections.



As the date set for elections approaches, women activists are intensifying efforts to increase women's participation in the November parliamentary elections. This file photo shows a woman carrying her child cast her vote in the 1993 elections

Anti-Corruption Department handles 300 cases, Bino says

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Anti-Corruption Department, created under the former government of Prime Minister Abdul Karim Khatib, has so far dealt with 300 corruption cases at public sector departments, mainly the Amman Municipality, Customs Department, the Water Authority and the Central Bank of Jordan, Major General Samih Bino, the department director has said in a lecture.

Maj. Gen. Bino told a meeting of the Rotary Club that his department has so far referred 300 cases to the prosecutor general and the concerned ministries about corruption and abuse of authority in the public sector.

"We are pursuing our efforts around the clock to protect the nation and we have succeeded to a large extent in deterring acts of corruption in the public sector and in preventing excesses through diligent efforts," said Maj. Gen. Bino, emphasising that most of the department's work was directed against

fraud and embezzlement cases.

"We can stem corruption by at least 90 per cent if we succeed in placing the right person in the right position," he said noting that he believed corruption in the private sector was much higher than in government.

He said that the department is manned by 20 Department of Intelligence officers and a judge all working within the framework of the law and closely coordinating their work with the Audit Bureau and other concerned departments.

Citing examples of the department's work, Maj. Gen. Bino said that in the sector of customs only, the department recently prevented the smuggling into the country of 800 large cartons containing different merchandise coming from eastern Europe and Cyprus. The smugglers were apprehended and the government fined Jordanian merchants involved in the case a sum of JDI million, he said.

Maj. Gen. Bino referred to other cases like imported

food that did not meet the country's specifications and standards or was unfit for human consumption.

He said that in a case of tax evasion, the department was able to find that a taxpayer had forged papers to enable him to pay only JDI7,000 instead of JDI700,000. In another case a taxpayer was forced to pay the required JDI1.5 million instead of only JDI 30,000 he had declared.

Maj. Gen. Bino related other cases pertaining to manipulation by three Water Authority employees who had succeeded in embezzling JDI600,000 by agreeing with subscribers to damage water meters at the Ain Ghazal water pumping station to evade paying for their water bills.

He also reported cases involving people who used to forge coupons, or documents faking their ownership of real estates enabling them to conduct illegal sale of lands.

Campaign against smoking starts today

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Health Friday announced a nationwide campaign against smoking, starting Saturday, on the occasion of Non-Smoking Day.

Minister of Health Ashraf Kurdi said in a statement the campaign will be launched under the theme: "Together Towards a World Free of Smoking," which is the slogan set by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in various parts of the world. He said the campaign against smoking would be very tough especially if not backed by a political decision and a national strategy aimed at warning people of the dangerous habit of smoking.

Unless governments find a substitute income for the farmers who depend on growing tobacco for their living, the campaign will have little effect, Dr. Kurdi added. Quoting WHO statement, the minister said that nearly three million people around the world die every year as a direct result of smoking, most in the developing nations.

Jordan, he said, was among the first group of Arab states to introduce legislation for the protection of public health

against the danger of smoking and was among the countries that ban commercial advertising for cigarettes in the media.

In 1976 the government passed a law prohibiting smoking in public places.

Dr. Kurdi said that health departments around the country will be holding seminars, lectures and other activities to spread awareness about smoking and to highlight the danger to non-smokers caused by inhaling the smoke in closed areas.

He said that the campaign will be carried out in cooperation with the ministries of edu-

cation and awqaf and Islamic affairs as well as schools and community colleges and through the distribution of publications and posters.

A 1995 study showed that 28 per cent of Jordanians, 48 per cent of them men, smoke. In the U.S. and Western Europe the average of women who smoke has been shown also to be slightly higher than that of men.

WHO statistics show that smoking is responsible for 35 per cent of all cancer cases and that 50 per cent of teenagers who start smoking today can project an early mortality.

Journalists fact-finding mission arrives today

AMMAN (U.N. Information Service) — A delegation of international journalists will arrive in Amman on Saturday for three days of briefings and interviews with government officials on the Middle East peace process.

Organised by the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI), this fact-finding mission follows DPI's annual International Encounter on the Question of Palestine, which this year took place in Athens from May 26-28.

Some 50 journalists and analysts from around the world participated in the Athens encounter, including Jordan Times Editor-in-Chief George Hawamneh and Centre for Strategic Studies Director Mustafa Hanameh. The Encounter is a General Assembly mandated programme for the promotion of the Palestine question. Seven of the international journalists who participated in the Encounter were selected to visit Cairo and Amman for briefings with government officials in those two capitals.

Accompanied by DPI Information Officer Yousef Hamdan, the group of journalists will arrive in Amman on Saturday, May 31, and will depart on Tuesday, June 3. During their stay, they will meet with various government ministers and others who will brief them on the latest developments in the peace process and on Jordan's role in advancing that process.

Jordan, Iraq traders to intensify contacts

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian and Iraqi businessmen Friday voiced their keen interest in developing scopes of bilateral cooperation in the economic field to achieve economic integration.

At the conclusion of the meetings of the Higher Joint Jordanian-Iraqi Committee, comprising the Federation of Iraqi Chambers of Commerce, Iraqi Industries Federation and Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI), the two sides agreed to intensify contacts and to exchange visits by economic delegations from both countries.

Representatives of the Iraqi

economic sector welcomed the initiative by the ACI to contact official Jordanian authorities, as well as international organisations, to organise airfares of Iraqi patients wishing to receive medical treatment at Jordanian medical institutions.

The two sides stressed the need for Jordan to make every possible effort with the U.N. Sanctions Committee to ensure the speedy approval of contracts concluded with Jordan within the context of the oil-for-food formula.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, President of the Iraqi

Industries Federation Adnan Al Qudsi voiced his country's appreciation to Jordan for its continued support for Iraq to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people.

Mr. Qudsi said his talks dealt with means of further developing bilateral cooperation in the economic field.

The Iraqi guest said Jordan will be one of the first countries to benefit from lifting the embargo on Iraq, adding that his country will continue to import foodstuffs and other commodities through the port of Agaba.

He noted that Jordan has promised further facilities to

Iraqi imports through Agaba. He added that his country is interested in importing construction steel and water pipes from Jordan when the embargo is lifted.

Among the other countries to benefit from lifting the embargo enforced on Iraq since 1990 are Syria and Egypt, he said, adding that a Syrian economic delegation has just concluded a successful visit to Iraq, during which the Iraqi side agreed to import wheat and cereals from Syria.

He noted that an Iraqi economic delegation will visit Damascus to pursue the talks held recently in Baghdad.

Guest workers get three more weeks to adjust their status

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Labour has extended by three weeks, starting June 1, a deadline it had previously set for guest workers to obtain work permits or benefit from exemption of paying heavy fines for overstaying in Jordan.

Minister of Labour Saleh Khasawneh was quoted in the local press Friday as saying that he decided to extend the deadline by three weeks because the ministry's offices were still receiving applications by guest workers trying to comply with the regulations.

The ministry last March said it was granting the workers, mostly Egyptians, a three-month period ending May 31 during which they had to either obtain a valid work permit or leave the country without paying the fines calculated at the rate of JDI for each extra day of stay.

Former Minister of

Labour Abdul Hafez Shakhaneh reached an agreement with the Egyptian authorities in March on tens of thousands of Egyptians currently residing in Jordan but unable to leave because of the fines.

Dr. Shakhaneh then estimated the number of Egyptians working in Jordan, mostly illegally, at 280,000.

Press reports Friday said that the three extra weeks were needed to enable 18 government offices in various governorates to deal with the applications by guest workers who could not meet the deadline.

According to government regulations, an Arab worker employed in agriculture pays a JDI10, while a non-Arab pays JDI50. Arabs working in construction pay JDI100, and non-Arabs pay JDI300.

Al Ra'i daily reported that as a result of the current process the ministry

has so far collected JDI4 million and is expected to collect JDI4 million more by the end of the new deadline.

According to ministry figures 90 per cent of the foreigners working in the Kingdom are Egyptians, 30 per cent in agriculture and the rest in other trades.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali last week pledged to work closely with the private sector in order to create work for the unemployed Jordanians estimated at 18 per cent of the workforce, to enable them to replace guest workers.

He said during a visit to the Ministry of Labour that the government would transfer its skilled workers for work in companies, factories, stores and other organisations, and to pay their wages for a trial period after which employers might decide whether to keep them or not.

WHAT'S GOING ON

SEMINAR

* "The Scholastic Mathematics Curriculum" with the participation of experts at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Exhibition of Jordanian products at the Amman International Exhibit, Marj Al Hamam, until June 2.
* Works by Guy Ferrer at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until June 15.
* "One-of-a-Kind" artists' book exhibit, at the American Centre, Abdoun, until June 25.

* Exhibition of works by Farouq Lambaz at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until June 19. Also displaying works by Paris-based Moroccan artist Najia Mahadji, until June 12, as well as showing an exhibition by architectural photographer Said Nuseibah entitled "The Farthest Mosque" and by contemporary Arab artists.

* Works by Munir Al-Ubaidi at Hamourabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until May 31.
* Photography exhibition by Samer Bqayeen at the Cervantes Institute, Jabal Amman, until May 31.
* Spring exhibition '97 entitled "Spring is Blooming" at the Jordan River Designs (Tel. 613061/2), until May 31.

Afghan opposition forces make further gains in north

KABUL (AFP) — Afghan opposition forces seized a key northern town Friday and three vital provinces from the Taliban, dealing a second blow to the fundamentalist Islamic militia in less than a week.

Forces of Afghan opposition Commander Ahmad Shah Masood captured Jabul Siraj in heavy fighting, as the Taliban conceded defeat in the strategic highway town.

A Taliban spokesman told the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) agency the withdrawal was a "tactical retreat." After initial "panic" the situation was improving and the Taliban was regrouping its forces in the area, a Taliban official later told AIP.

The militia's fighters have also been flushed out of the northwestern Jozjan, Sar-i-Pol and Faryab provinces, senior Uzbek militia leader General Homaioon Fauzi, told AFP by telephone from Mazar-i-Sharif.

In New Delhi the envoy of ousted President Burhanuddin Rabbani said more than 3,000 Taliban fighters had been killed, wounded or captured in recent days.

A force of about 5,000 Taliban commandos, "including a good number of Pakistanis in the guise of Taliban," were air-dropped or sent by road to Mazar-i-

Sharif," the Press Trust of India (PTI) quoted Masood Khalili as saying.

"But people stood up against the outsiders. After a 20-hour fighting pushed back the Pakistan-backed Taliban, and more than 3,000 commandos were either killed, wounded or captured," PTI quoted him as saying.

Mr. Khalili, who heads the Afghan embassy in New Delhi, said his information was based on wireless reports he received from Commander Masood.

The Islamic militia entered the three provinces only last week after the rebellion of a key commander under Uzbek warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum.

In separate fighting the opposition Shiite faction Hezb-i-Wahdat claimed Friday its forces had wrested control of the Ghorband Valley northwest of Kabul from the Taliban.

"Our forces attacked Taliban and drove them out of Ghorband after day-long fighting Thursday," said Wahdat spokesman Rasul Talib.

No independent confirmation or comment from the Taliban militia was immediately available.

Mr. Talib, based in Pakistan, said details of casualties on both sides to the fighting were not known so far. He

described the fighting as "heavy."

Ghorband, about 80 kilometres from the Afghan capital, was taken by the Taliban militia early this year after it captured Kabul in September.

As opposition gains against the Taliban continued, the man who helped the Taliban defeat Gen. Dostum stepped in as the new head of a key faction.

General Abdul Malik, who rebelled against Gen. Dostum last week, allowing the Taliban to make significant gains across the country, Thursday assumed leadership of the National Islamic Movement (NIM).

General Fauzi told AFP by telephone from Mazar-i-Sharif. The faction was formerly led by Gen. Dostum, who fled to Turkey Saturday. Gen. Malik then broke his alliance with the Taliban after the Islamic militia reportedly started disarming Shiite fighters and other groups in the city.

Gen. Fauzi said the front-line between the Taliban militia and Gen. Malik's forces was once again in northwestern Badkhis province, which the Taliban entered this month after a six-month stand-off.

There was no independent confirmation of Gen. Fauzi's claim and Taliban officials were not immediately

available for comment.

Commander Masood's forces, after taking Jabul Siraj, 77 kilometres north of Kabul, were locked in heavy fighting for control of Charikar, the AIP said.

Charikar, capital of northern Parwan province lies about 65 kilometres from Kabul near the Salang Highway leading to the north. Analysts said the fall of the town could put the Taliban-controlled Afghan capital in the range of opposition rockets.

However, the Taliban has rushed reinforcements to stop Commander Masood's troops, AIP said.

The gains Friday followed the seizure of two areas by Commander Masood's troops in a pre-dawn surprise attack against the Taliban Thursday.

His forces captured Gulbahaar township at the mouth of the northeastern Panjshir Valley stronghold and near-by Sherkat town, which houses a textile mill.

The Taliban, positioned there since January, had to retreat from both towns, located in Kapisa province, after suffering heavy casualties, Taliban sources in the area told AFP.

Taliban soldiers admitted losing dozens of their fighters.



A Red Cross worker looks at the bodies of the fighters of the Taliban Islamic militia in a Mazar-i-Sharif street after fighting that broke out between Taliban militia and troops of General Abdul Malik. The Taliban militia, suffering many casualties, were forced to retreat from the city that was captured on May 23 by General Malik (Reuters photo)

Spanish scientists find possible new human species

MADRID (R) — A group of Spanish scientists said Thursday they had discovered a new species of human beings in a 780,000-year-old fossil, possibly the oldest known European.

"We believe this is a new species that we have called Homo Antecessor," Jose Maria Bermudez de Castro of the National Museum of Natural Sciences in Madrid told a news conference.

"It's a species that we consider the common ancestor of modern humanity and the Neanderthals."

Mr. Bermudez de Castro and a team of Spanish paleo-anthropologists found the fossilised remains of a boy with a remarkably modern face in a limestone cave in Spain's central Atapuerca Mountains during an excavation from 1994 to 1996.

They said the unique combination of features, with a face like the modern homo sapiens species and a jaw and brow similar to the extinct Neanderthals, led them to name a new species, a finding published in the U.S. Journal Science Friday.

The boy was discovered among a group of six people of almost modern height and bone size with a relatively advanced cognitive ability, as judged by the quality of tools found near them.

"This is clearly a very important new finding," Richard Gallagher, European editor of the journal Science, told reporters.

"These are bold, exciting proposals that already have the field buzzing."

The Spanish team acknowledged that the decision to name a new species based on the reconstructed remains of just one boy — the faces of the adults in the cave were not as markedly modern — was controversial.

"We think we have enough information to define it in the proper sense of a new species," said Antonio Rosas, another paleo-anthropologist at the National Museum of Natural Sciences.

"But people are probably going to need some time to accommodate this proposal."

The find, with more than 80 fossils of skulls, jaws, teeth and other parts of the skeleton, will offer new insight into a mysterious time and place in human evolution, according to a research news article to be published in science.

U.K., China wrangle in final Hong Kong handover talks

HONG KONG (R) — China and Britain met Friday to tackle the last unsolved problems before Hong Kong's historic handover to Beijing in 32 days' time, and there was little sign of harmony.

As senior British and Chinese diplomats wrangled over details of the handover ceremony and Britain's future rights to monitor Hong Kong's progress, future Hong Kong leader Tung Chee urged activists not to rattle China by making the territory a base for subverting the Communist-ruled country.

Overnight in London, U.S. President Bill Clinton threw his support behind Britain and said the United States would closely monitor Hong Kong's progress on democracy and human rights after the change of sovereignty.

Britain's chief diplomatic negotiator Hugh Davies issued a gloomy comment as he entered the final day of talks with China. Highlighting discord, Mr. Davies said good results would depend on "cooperation from the Chinese side."

"It would be nice to hope that they would be more helpful today," he said, clearly expecting few concrete results.

"I don't think everything will be settled today. There will still be one or two things that need to be resolved over the next four weeks and we will continue our contact with the Chinese," Mr. Davies said.

Mr. Tung told pro-democracy activists to forget mourning China's bloody 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, when army tanks crushed student-led pro-democracy protests with a heavy loss of life. The June 4 anniversary annually draws tens of thousands of protesters to the streets of Hong Kong.

"No one really wanted June 4 to happen. But over the past eight years, some people have continued to persist on the issue of June 4," Mr. Tung told local newspapers.

"The fact is that China has achieved a lot in many areas ... politics, economy ... in the past eight years."

"We must not become a base that will threaten the existence of our country," Mr. Tung said. "That is why local political parties must not be controlled or influenced by foreign forces."

Hong Kong, a thriving capitalist territory of 6.4 million people, is to become an autonomous part of China with its capitalist

system intact. But under prodding from China, Mr. Tung has launched plans to reverse liberal democratic and civil rights reforms introduced since 1992 by colonial Governor Chris Patten.

Mr. Clinton signalled the United States would not stand by silently if these changes went too far in undermining freedom.

"We will keep faith with the people of Hong Kong by monitoring the transition to make sure that civil liberties are maintained, that democratic values and free market principles are maintained," he said after talks with British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

"Those are the things for which the United Kingdom and the United States stand, and those are the things that the (handover) agreement guarantees," Mr. Clinton said.

Exiled Chinese dissidents and Tiananmen veterans have been leaving Hong Kong as the handover approaches, fearing they will be persecuted or sent back to Beijing if they stay after July 1.

Six dissidents flew out to the United States Thursday, led by Liu Yong, the brother of prominent dissident Liu Gang, who is on China's most wanted list but now lives in New York.

A dozen or so Chinese exiles remain in Hong Kong, the most notable of whom is free trade union leader Han Dongfang. They plan to join commemorative rallies around June 4 in honour of those killed in Tiananmen in 1989.

Meanwhile, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) almost doubled its advance guard in Hong Kong with a fresh contingent of soldiers Friday to gear up for the British colony's historic merger with China.

A convoy of 90 PLA troops in 12 military vehicles drove over the border to join 106 soldiers already stationed in Hong Kong taking over barracks for a garrison eventually expected to be up to 10,000 strong.

The latest team of 17 PLA field officers, 44 junior officers and 29 soldiers was greeted at the border by advance unit commander General Zhou Borong and Hong Kong security officials.

They are expected to be deployed in six military sites including the Osborn Barracks which Britain vacates Saturday.

Blair, Clinton cement warm personal relations

LONDON (R) — British Prime Minister Tony Blair and U.S. President Bill Clinton have cemented their warm personal relations by declaring themselves political twins from a new generation with no use for "yesterday's ideology."

At a news conference in the garden of the Downing Street Office, that Mr. Blair moved into less than a month ago, they praised each other's political achievements and unveiled a joint initiative to bring down unemployment in the developed world.

"This is a new era which calls for new generation politics, and new generation leadership," said Mr. Blair, who acknowledged his debt to Mr. Clinton's Democrats for blazing the trail for Labour's landslide victory in Britain's May 1 election.

"This is the generation that prefers reason to doctrine, that is strong on ideals, indifferent to ideology, whose instinct is to judge government not by grand designs but by practical results."

Mr. Clinton, visiting London at the end of a three-day trip to Europe, echoed Mr. Blair. "I don't think it is the end of ideology, but I think it is the end of yesterday's ideology," he said.

In another demonstration of the close ties the leaders enjoy, Mr. Clinton, prolonged his visit by several hours to enable the two men and their wives to visit a plush London restaurant on the banks of the Thames.

Mr. Clinton earlier became the first U.S. president for almost 30 years to address the British cabinet, telling Mr. Blair and his ministers: "I have watched with enormous interest the energy and vigour with which you have all taken office."

The harmony between the two continued as they banished aides for an hour-long chat and then had lunch while their wives visited a new replica of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre on the banks of the River Thames.

British officials said

Cherie Blair "got on like a house on fire" with Hillary Clinton, who offered her advice on how to bring up children in the glare of media attention.

Mr. Clinton, visibly relaxed in Mr. Blair's company, said there was an "unbreakable alliance" between the two countries.

Mr. Clinton said the only advice he had for Mr. Blair was to concentrate as hard in office on the bread and butter issues of most concern to voters as he did during the election campaign.

"Relaxing concentration is fatal in this business," he said.

The two men agreed to put a two-year plan to the group of seven industrialised countries at next month's summit in Denver, Colorado, to tackle the scourge of unemployment and to ensure their citizens real economic opportunities.

Mr. Clinton, restating his commitment to help the Northern Ireland peace process, urged Irish Republican

Army guerrillas to "lay down their guns for good"

and said his administration "will be there, active and involved, along the way."

He said Mr. Blair had made a good start by affirming that he wanted Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing, in peace talks if the guerrillas declared a credible ceasefire.

Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams welcomed Mr. Clinton's words but gave no hint as to whether his outlawed Irish guerrilla allies would heed the call and stop the use of violence.

Earlier, at the cabinet meeting, Mr. Blair said his government's efforts to mend fences with Europe after years of mistrust under the previous Conservative government did not mean Britain was turning away from the United States.

Later Thursday, Mr. Clinton left Britain. His plane took off from London's Heathrow Airport just after 11 p.m. (2200 GMT).

Angola strengthens security on ex-Zaire border

LISBON (AFP) — The Angolan army has tightened security on the border with the new Democratic Republic of Congo to prevent troop movements by forces of the ousted Mobutu regime, the government announced Friday.

Defence Minister General Pedro Sebastiao said that soldiers loyal to toppled President Mobutu Sese Seko of former Zaire, backed by former Angolan rebels, were repeatedly crossing the border, the Angolan News Agency (ANGOP) reported.

"These precautionary measures will put an end to the constant (frontier) violations in order to bring calm for the peoples living in regions bordering on the former Zaire," Gen. Sebastiao said.

Troops of Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola

(UNITA) — which has made peace with the Luanda government — were reported to have sided with Mr. Mobutu's troops in their few battles against the rebel alliance of Laurent Kabila, who was sworn in as new president Thursday.

Mr. Kabila, for his part, was said by the former regime to be getting backing from Angolan government troops and Rwanda and Uganda.

Informed sources in Luanda said Friday that a large number of Angolan government soldiers had been wounded in clashes in UNITA-held areas in the north.

Correspondents for Angolan state radio in Eastern Mexico added that skirmishes were continuing between government forces and "armed men" near the frontier.

UNITA alleges that the government has been seeking a pretext to mount an offensive into UNITA-held areas — and that the situation over the border has created one.

"We are ready to take anyone who wishes to UNITA-held localities so that they can see that there are no armed men from Zaire among us," said Isaias Samakuva, UNITA's delegate to the Joint Commission on Applying Angola's Peace Accords.

Another UNITA official denied reports that UNITA units had welcomed several hundred pro-Mobutu troops at Negage, in the north.

He said a convoy of UNITA supporters had arrived in Negage from Kinshasa, but there was "not one soldier" among them.

Geo. Sebastiao, speaking in Lucoa, capital of the

Eastern Mexico province, said that the political and military situation in Angola was stable apart from the north and in the oil enclave of Cabinda, which lies between the two Congo states.

"Cabinda province is less calm but the Angolan Armed Forces have been cracking down on separatist militants," he said. Several separatist movements are active in the enclave, which came under Luanda's control on independence from Portugal in 1975.

Officially, the UNITA army — totalling 65,000 men — has been disbanded, but it continues to control the diamond-rich provinces of Lunda-Norte and Lunda-Sud, as well as vast areas in the north, centre and southeast.

UNITA is the Portuguese acronym for National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.

Polls: Canada's Liberal Party keeping majority

OTTAWA (R) — Canada's ruling Liberal Party should manage to retain a parliamentary majority in Monday's election despite a steady slide in support over the past month, two polls showed Thursday.

The last of five daily tracking polls conducted for Reuters by Zogby International showed support for Prime Minister Jean Chretien's Liberals rising to 41.9 per cent of decided voters from 39.7 per cent in Wednesday's poll.

"It appears the Liberal support has stopped its downward slide," pollster John Zogby said.

"It appears that the Liberals are headed toward a majority (and) that Reform, on the basis of its strength in the west, should win the second greatest number of seats," he said.

A Gallup Canada poll taken May 25-28 and released late Thursday gave the Liberals 41 per cent among decided voters, down from the 55 per cent in mid-April and the 46 per

cent just before televised debates in mid-May.

However, Canadian voters have been volatile in recent elections, and one in four were still undecided in both polls.

"Traditionally, undecided voters break against the incumbent and do so over the last couple of days," Mr. Zogby said.

Reuters-Zogby polls earlier this week threw into question the Liberals' ability to win another outright majority.

Financial markets have been jittery over fears that the Liberals' deficit-reduction plans might be jeopardised if the Conservatives, who want immediate tax cuts, or the New Democrats, who want more spending, bold the balance of power.

In the 1993 election, the Liberals won 177 of the 295 seats in the House of Commons on 41 per cent of the vote.

Yeltsin clarifies statement on nuclear missiles

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin made clear Friday that Russia would no longer target nuclear missiles at NATO states, recovering from an apparent slip of the tongue this week in which he said their warheads would be removed.

"In order to strengthen the atmosphere of trust I took the decision: Russian rockets will no longer be aimed at NATO countries. Now these rockets will have, as the military say, a zero flight mission," Mr. Yeltsin said in a radio address.

That means the missiles will not be programmed to go anywhere, although their computers can be reactivated very quickly.

"From our side that is of course a gesture of goodwill," Mr. Yeltsin said.

Mr. Yeltsin shocked a NATO-Russia summit in Paris Tuesday with an impromptu statement in which he said that Moscow would disarm all its missiles targeted at NATO countries.

"I have taken a decision today. Everything that is aimed at countries present here, all of those weapons, are going to have their warheads removed," Mr. Yeltsin told the assembled leaders.

Mr. Yeltsin made the statement after signing the "founding act" on a new partnership for security in Europe with leaders of the 16-nation Atlantic alliance.

Russian officials hastily "clarified" his remark, saying it meant only that the missiles would no longer be targeted at NATO territory.

The United States and Russia agreed at a summit in Moscow in 1993 that they would no longer target each other's cities. A similar agreement exists with Britain.

Mr. Yeltsin's announcement extended those commitments to include the territory of all NATO states and the decision was warmly welcomed in the West.

Mr. Yeltsin told Russians Friday it was the only way to avoid a new, dangerous split in Europe.

He was clearly trying to overcome any popular scepticism towards the NATO-Russia deal.

Mr. Yeltsin's Communist and nationalist opponents have accused him of selling out to the West, which plans to expand the NATO defence alliance to take in some of Moscow's former communist allies despite fierce Russian opposition.

"Our energetic political, diplomatic efforts forced the NATO countries to take into account Russia's legal interests. As a result we succeeded in agreeing an important document binding on all the participants," Mr. Yeltsin said.

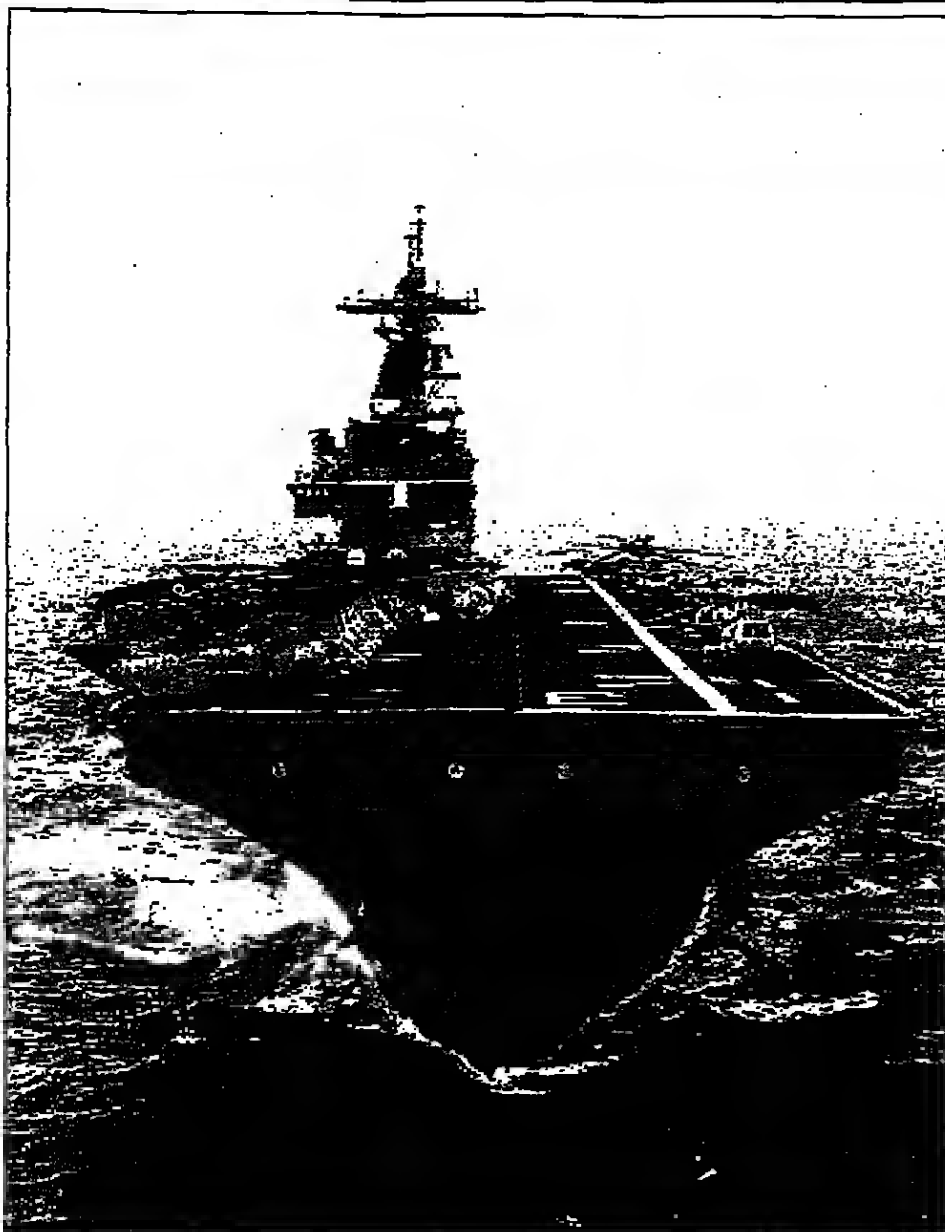
U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen Thursday gave a cautious response to Mr. Yeltsin's pledge to stop aiming nuclear missiles at NATO countries.

"It's important that we establish as good a relationship as possible with our Russian counterparts. But we have to proceed with great caution to make sure we know exactly what is taking place and what it means for our security," Mr. Cohen said at a news conference.

"I don't think we should take any immediate action," Mr. Cohen said Thursday, adding that he wanted to clarify exactly what it was that Mr. Yeltsin had pledged to do.

Mr. Cohen also reiterated that allied troops would be withdrawn from Bosnia by June 1998.

"It is my belief we will be out of Bosnia ... by the end of June next year. There is no disagreement on the part of anyone within our government," Mr. Cohen said.



The U.S. Navy amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge (LHD 3) operating off the West African coast near Sierra Leone, has been ordered to evacuate American civilians from that country in the wake of the May 25 coup. According to a Pentagon spokesman, the Kearsarge had arrived off Freetown and began evacuating about 250 Americans in Sierra Leone Friday (Reuter photo)

Students take over train, skirmish with police outside Seoul campus

SEOUL (AFP) — Some 5,000 radical students, reinforced by colleagues who virtually hijacked a train from the south of the country, clashed with tear-gas shooting riot police in central Seoul Friday night.

Witnesses said the radicals, shouting anti-government slogans and armed with backpacks of petrol-filled bottles, hurled rocks and fire bombs at the riot police for two hours before heading toward Seoul's Hanyang University campus.

There were no immediate reports of serious injuries in the clashes in Chong-No Street, though several students were arrested, they said.

The street violence came after hundreds of radical students arrived here from campuses in the south of the country aboard a train.

They had fought their way aboard the express on at least five stops, to evade police road and rail blocks to prevent them joining planned anti-government demonstrations.

Yonhap news agency said the students in groups of

several hundred at four provincial stations had fought off riot police with fire-bombs and steel pipes to board the express.

The first group jumped on at the coastal city of Mokpo, Yonhap said. At the next station at Moosan, 50 out of 500 managed to jump aboard, 300 boarded at Hamgyoog, and another 100 hauled their way on at Naju.

"There were just too many of them, and they were angry," the agency quoted a railway employee as saying of failed attempts to get the students off the train before it arrived in Seoul, where radical students have planned a weekend of anti-government protests.

The first of the Seoul demonstrations started Friday when riot police fired tear-gas into a crowd of 600 students shouting anti-government slogans and denouncing President Kim Young-Sam outside Seoul's Hanyang University.

Witnesses said the first battle broke out in heavy rain early in the day as the president was delivering a speech in which he said he could not answer opposition

demands to reveal details of his 1992 campaign funding.

The skirmishes resumed late in the afternoon, when police chained the gates of the campus shut to prevent students from outside joining an on-campus rally.

The students, shouting "down with Kim Young-Sam" and using wooden panels to try to shield themselves from volleys of gas and yellow paint fired by police, tried to tear the chains off the gates, an AFP photographer said.

No injuries were reported and witnesses said those students did not use fire-bombs, iron bars or rocks, the trademark weapons of the radical student movement, in the hour-long afternoon battle.

The political opposition, which Friday reacted angrily to Mr. Kim's refusal to reveal his campaign funding details, accuses him of using money from the Hanbo Business Group to seed the current Hanbo scandal.

Hanbo collapsed under \$5.8 billion of debt in January revealing a seamy trail of corruption in high places.

China releases four dissidents

BEIJING (AFP) — China has overturned "counter-revolution" convictions against four dissidents in a tentative step towards a reassessment of the 1989 army massacre on pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square.

With the eighth anniversary of the June 4 crackdown only days away, one of the four dissidents told AFP Friday that the Jilin Province High Court had quashed their convictions for organising a "counter-revolutionary clique" during the 1989 demonstrations.

Leng Wanbao, who is currently on medical parole, said the court had delivered the legal papers to his home in the provincial

capital Changchun Thursday.

"There are no conditions attached to this decision and the others will be released on June 9," said Leng, 37, a former worker in the motor-tooling section of the Changchun No. 1 motor works.

"We have been making appeals ever since we were sentenced, but I don't know why the court suddenly made a decision like this," Mr. Leng said.

Jilin Province High Court had earlier upheld the convictions on appeal and the Chinese government confirmed the sentences to former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker when he visited China in 1991.



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U.S. Marines start Sierra Leone evacuation mission

FREETOWN (R) — U.S. helicopters landed Marines in the Sierra Leone capital Friday to evacuate Americans despite a move by coup leaders in the West African state to close the country's airspace, witnesses said.

Four helicopters from the warship Kearsarge landed Marines with military vehicles at a hotel in Freetown where Americans were assembling to be evacuated.

The Marines quickly deployed and secured the perimeter of the hotel supplementing a Nigerian military force already there.

There was no sign of the Sierra Leone Armed Forces whose new leaders closed the country's airspace and banned domestic and international flights on the eve of the U.S. evacuation.

The coup leaders are facing the threat of regional military action to reverse last Sunday's seizure of power, which has been greeted with international outrage.

State radio announced the border closure in its late night news bulletin Thursday.

"All borders are now closed — land, sea and air. All international flights are banned and prohibited. No aircraft (is allowed) over Sierra Leone territory," said an official statement.

The United States said it would go ahead with the planned evacuation of about 250 American citizens from Freetown because of the unstable situation in Sierra Leone.

A Pentagon official said the evacuation would take place despite the ban. "All appropriate security measures have been taken. There's no change," he said.

A U.S. embassy statement, issued before the state radio announcement, told Americans who wanted to leave to assemble at a city hotel early Friday to be transported by helicopter to the Kearsarge. They would then be taken to Conakry, Guinea.

Britain, Sierra Leone's former colonial ruler, completed the airlift of nearly 400 of its citizens and other Westerners before the border closure was announced. The Boeing 747, char-

tered by the British Foreign Office, arrived in London Friday morning with 396 passengers, Britain's Press Association news agency reported.

The evacuation flight carried Europeans, Australians, Canadians and other nationalities, the agency said.

Regional power Nigeria is building up troops in Sierra Leone and is expected to try to reverse the coup on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The low-ranking officers who toppled elected President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah last weekend have sent out feelers for a possible diplomatic solution to the crisis, military sources said Thursday.

The sources said Norwegian diplomats would try to set up a meeting Friday with coup leader Major Johnny Paul Koromah and his associates, who have been largely holed up in a beachside, concrete military complex in the capital Freetown.

Nearly a week after the coup there is no sign of a cabinet and many Sierra

Leoneans say Maj. Koromah is having trouble getting credible people to join his government.

The military sources said the evacuation operations were the main reason why the Nigerians had not acted so far despite support for their role by the United States and ECOWAS.

"The United States particularly insisted against any action that would traumatise women and children being evacuated — gunfire and things like that," one source told Reuters.

On Wednesday, Lebanon airlifted women and children from its prominent community in Sierra Leone. The United Nations sent dependants of its staff to Guinea by ship.

The United States rebuffed an appeal by Sierra Leone's ambassador in Washington to help overturn the coup.

"The role of the Kearsarge is to evacuate American citizens only. Personnel from the Kearsarge will have no role beyond that," said U.S. State Department spokesman John Dinger.

French poll race down to wire with left eyeing upset

PARIS (AFP) — France's snap poll race goes down to the wire this weekend, with the ruling centre-right struggling to avoid humiliating defeat at the hands of opposition Socialists in an election which could play a crucial role in shaping Europe's future.

The outcome of French President Jacques Chirac's huge political gamble will be known Sunday evening, after voters cast their ballots in the second round of voting.

The election was called 10 months early by Mr. Chirac in a bid to prepare the introduction of the European single currency.

"The game is far from over," said former Gaullist Premier Edouard Balladur on French Radio, adding that the centre-right is "very far from being sure of winning next Sunday."

Socialist Party leader Lionel Jospin, whose left-wing alliance scored a shock upset in first-round polls last weekend, has predicted the run-off ballots will produce a result which will "stupefy Europe."

"We are on the verge of an event that is going to stupefy Europe and raise a magnificent hope in Europe," Mr. Jospin declared to a crowd of 8,000 at a rally in the northern industrial city of Lille.

"It is the future and the balance of Europe that is going to be changed if we win, following the victory of our Labour friends in Britain," he said ahead of the final day of official campaigning Friday.

Two days before the second-round ballots, two opinion polls indicated that the left-wing bloc could win comfortably — even suggesting the Socialists could win without the support of the Communists, its uncomfortable bedfellows.

One survey, published by the daily Le Parisien in defiance of French electoral rules, gave the Socialists and its Green and other allies 283 seats in the 577-seat National Assembly — just six short of an absolute majority of 289. It echoed another unpublished poll Thursday, which also gave the Socialists an absolute majority on their own.

The Communists would win 32 seats, and the centre-right Rally For the Republic and Union for French Democracy

bloc 260, according to the survey by the CSA institute.

The centre-right majority meanwhile appeared to be pinning its hopes on a "dream ticket" — dubbed "the odd couple" by Jospin — comprising outgoing National Assembly Speaker Philippe Seguin and former Economy Minister Alain Madelin, a fervent advocate of free-market economics.

The pair, combining a populist former Euroskeptic with a hardline Thatcherite who was sacked two years ago for refusing to toe a moderate government line, have emerged as the leading contenders to save Mr. Chirac's skin.

Mr. Chirac's gamble, designed to renew his parliamentary mandate for the next five years, appeared two weeks ago to be a relatively safe bet. The ruling bloc, which had a crushing 80 per cent majority in the outgoing assembly, was predicted to win comfortably, albeit with a substantially reduced majority.

Things started going disastrously wrong Sunday night when the results of first round voting showed a spectacular collapse of the right's vote.

Less than 24 hours later Premier Alain Juppe dropped a bombshell into the election race by announcing he would resign next week whatever the result of the second round. His personal unpopularity was widely seen as responsible for the right's disastrous first-round performance.

Socialist leader Jospin derided the Seguin-Madelin ticket in a newspaper interview Thursday as an "odd couple" desperately harnessed together by Mr. Chirac in hopes of scraping through the second round.

The increasingly realistic possibility of a Socialist government in France next week was raised by the left-of-centre Liberation Friday, whose frontpage headline speculated "and if" under a cartoon of a dancing Jospin and Catherine Trautmann, the Socialist mayor of Strasbourg.

It set out possible members of a Jospin cabinet including such figures as former EU-supremo Jacques Delors, tipped as a possible foreign minister, and other leading left-wing heavyweights such as former premiers Michel Rocard and Laurent Fabius.

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Crown Prince Hassan urges new international humanitarian order, emphasises Jordan's commitment to respecting human rights and democracy as well as to the building of regional and international peace

Special to the Jordan Times

LONDON — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has renewed the call launched by Jordan over a decade ago to promote a new international humanitarian order which is universally accepted and respected.

Delivering the annual Denning Lecture at the International Students House in London on May 28, the Crown Prince said an ethical and humanitarian stocktaking is due now that the world is preparing to mark the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In the lecture, entitled "The Universality of Ethical Standards and the Governance of Civil Society," Prince Hassan cited the reports of the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues which warn of impending humanitarian disasters.

Prince Hassan said that the widespread suffering of millions of human beings is the consequence of ignoring the humanitarian dimensions and of putting strategic, political or economic considerations before ethical standards.

Reemphasising Jordan's commitment to respecting human rights and democracy as well as to the building of regional and international peace, Prince Hassan said: "In Jordan, both in the domestic sphere and in the international relations, there is no shortage of political will to meet the highest ethical standards."

"The policies pursued by Jordan hold up to scrutiny," said Prince Hassan in the lecture which was attended by His Royal Highness Prince Rashid Bin El Hassan and Jordanian Ambassador to London Fuad Ayyoub.

The Crown Prince, who was in London on a working trip accompanied by Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath, also stressed the role of civil society in consolidating equality, participation and political inclusion.

Prince Hassan also underlined the important role religious values can play in promoting understanding among different nations.

He called for a remodelling of policies to ensure the promotion of anthropological or "politics where people matter."

The lecture was followed by a discussion during which Prince Hassan urged regional cooperation on issues of mutual concern, such as water, and highlighted the need for inter and intra-regional cooperation.

Responding to a question, Prince Hassan reiterated Jordan's commitment to a just and lasting resolution to the question of refugees on the basis of meeting their right to



return and/or compensation.

He said that Jordan's policies have been predicated on a commitment to improving the living conditions of all segments of society, citing the recently adopted Social Productivity Package as an all-inclusive programme aimed at providing all Jordanians with a better life and raising the living standards of the less fortunate sectors of society.

The International Students House annually invites a prominent world figure to deliver the Denning Lecture.

Following are excerpts from the lecture:

"This coming year will be the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which represents an important opportunity to undertake an ethical and humanitarian stocktaking. As we approach this important anniversary, I would like to renew the call the government of Jordan launched over a decade ago to promote a New International Humanitarian Order. We have to move from a declaration to an order which is universally accepted and respected.

The Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues, which I had the privilege to co-chair, warned in a series of studies on specific issues which related to actions of man against man and nature, such as refugees, armed conflicts, famines, desertification, of impending global humanitarian disasters of unprecedented scale.

We have seen for ourselves in recent years the very real and widespread suffering of millions of our fellow human beings, that is the inevitable consequence of ignoring the human dimension and of putting strategic, political or economic considerations before ethical ones.

In response to these

danger signals, the commission called for a different approach in recognition of the fact that old solutions do not fit new problems and that there is a need to promote a new International Humanitarian Order, not petro-politics but other politics.

This call, while widely recognised as relevant, was not pursued as vigorously as it should have been in order not only to make contemporary society more humane but, above all, to better prepare the future for our children.

The call for a New International Humanitarian Order is more pertinent today than ever, and will go on being pertinent so long as conflicts and man-made disasters prevail. The Commission's Final Report was based on a simple but powerful message to the effect that "whatever detracts from human well-being must be questioned, regardless of its effects on economic growth, political power or the stability of a certain order."

We are fully aware that the idea of human solidarity and the ethics which must cement it imply an almost Copernican change of perspective, from a fractured to a holistic view of human welfare which is centred on the commonality of human interests.

A review of the humanitarian crises of the last few years makes the challenge we face quite clear. It is to make "the poor and the powerless visible and audible, to plead for unity in diversity and to articulate a humanitarian perspective to cope with the vicissitudes of an increasingly complex global society."

The major calamities we have witnessed in recent years in Somalia, Rwanda and Zaire, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and elsewhere are not only an affront to our common humanity. They are also a challenge to the existing coping mechanisms and to the international community's ability to prevent or contain such tragedies."

nisms and to the international community's ability to prevent or contain such tragedies.

The whole concept of humanitarian assistance is under scrutiny and so is the conceptual framework of peace keeping even as the world community struggles with peace making and peace building in different regions of the globe.

For example, the possible linkages between peacekeeping troops and humanitarian aid operations need to be reviewed on the basis of experience gained in the field. In the past few years, humanitarian aid workers, traditionally allowed to perform their tasks in peace, have become targets for murder and hostage-taking rival groups.

In fact, humanitarianism itself is increasingly a hostage to politics and hazards of military necessity. It is becoming increasingly difficult to extend international humanitarian assistance to areas affected by armed conflicts. It would be catastrophic — in an economic climate where developed nations already plead "donor fatigue" — if humanitarian assistance were to dry up or be at the mercy of armed belligerents for whom the security and well-being of innocent civilians are seldom a priority. A broader and clearer mandate for the peace keepers and a more adequate code of conduct for all concerned are called for just as much as the enforcement measures need a major review.

Efforts in the context of a new humanitarian order will help create a moral climate in which to improve existing international mechanisms and consequently the living conditions for all, without discrimination or exclusion. Satisfactory results can only be achieved on the basis of a genuine understanding of our inter-dependence on a range of inter-connected issues.

Ethics can thus keep pace with politics and morality can catch up with materialism. Global can then be addressed in genuine partnership. We all agree, I hope, that unprovoked violence

against others is unjustified, quite independently of the laws forbidding it. When asked why, we might say: It is because our consciences are pricked whenever we see it. Or because it undermines our beliefs in affording respect to the

most vociferous and principled sponsors of the peace process in the Middle East. We were among the first to send troops to Bosnia to protect its population from the ongoing ravages of war. We have the fourth largest contribution of

troops to the United Nations peacekeeping forces even though our population is only 4.5 million. And we have been outspoken supporters of regional arrangements and treaties designed to promote cooperation and trust between nations in our part of the world.

If countries were to scrutinise, individually and collectively, the national and international policies with the sole criteria of human welfare and public opinion, a lot of these policies as well as attitudes of the policy makers may well have to undergo radical changes.

During the cold war, nuclear powers piled enough bombs to kill every single individual on this planet twenty times over as though once was not enough and while the arms race raged, the real threats to peace like the lack of social justice and economic development, poverty, ethnic hatreds and political opportunism were neglected.

Now that the cold war is over, new defence alliances and realignments are being pursued. But defence against whom? It seems as though the sustainability of the military-industrial complex is dependent on the existence of an arch-enemy whose fear should persuade the public opinion to go along with huge defence budgets. If such an "enemy" no longer exists, it must be invented. The controversy started by Professor Huntington regarding the clash of civilisations is an attempt in that direction.

It must be recognised that wars between nations have been replaced by internal conflicts. The threat to states now is taking the form of socio-political implosion rather than external aggression. In the last two decades, internal conflicts have claimed more lives than the total casualties of the two world wars. In order to avoid such catastrophes, governments need to develop better social policies rather than defence policies.

In this context, another moral problem that is gaining ground is that of sale of arms. The dilem-

physical integrity and well-being of our fellow human beings.

These explanations are not, as you will surely agree, a dictate of reason, even if they can be rationalised. They represent the very essence of what is "human."

The social contract, utilitarianism, legal positivism, pragmatism and other such theories have been influential in shaping many of today's societies and political creeds. And yet, if human brain is not sustained by human heart, if thoughts and feelings do not mutually support each other, then too theories, however impressive, can ensure the well-being of mankind or sustainability of societies.

If we were not so obsessed as a species with cultivating a self-image as rational beings, we would surely do away with so much that passes as knowledge and education. We would do so because it is intuitive logic which still eludes scientific enquiry that is the main determinant of human behaviour. Morality, besides furnishing us with a framework for our actions, is the force which drives them, and our basic human instincts are the sustaining force behind it.

But just because they are intuitive, it is not to a "brooding omnipresence in the sky" as Oliver Wendell Holmes put it, but to empirical observation, that we must look when we search for content and detail. From my limited experience of living and travelling throughout the world, and in particular spending several years in this country, I have always recognised that we share far more than is openly acknowledged.

From the social courtesies of daily living to the political ambitions of those in power, we are all guided by the same notions of mutual respect, dignity, fulfilment and, yes, civility.

In Jordan, both in the domestic sphere and in international relations, there is no shortage of political will to meet the highest ethical standards.

The policies pursued by Jordan hold up to scrutiny. We have been among

between ethical considerations on the one hand, and economic benefits on the other, is the challenge faced by policy makers.

A global level, our policies and priorities call for an urgent review. It has been said that we did not inherit this planet from our parents: we borrowed it from our children. I am referring here not only to ecology and physical environment but also to social environment and the welfare of individuals. If only we, as humans, could devote as many resources to "inner space" as we do to "outer space," we would have a much better planet and a far healthier global society.

I firmly believe that a model for the global stage can be found in the notion of civil society. At the base of civil society is an ethical dimension. For civil society is pluralistic in composition and democratic in behaviour. This means that equality, participation and political inclusion are ensured. Tolerance towards those with different views is practised.

Members of civil society are bound together in mutual reliance, and in that sense the term must surely encompass all people in the world today. Members of civil society may not necessarily like one another. But they know that they must live together, and work together, and that antagonism can only leave them all poorer and less secure.

The notion of civil society within states is gaining ground. But the notion of an international civil society has yet to fully develop. And this, I believe, is what is needed. It is in this specific context that the call for a new humanitarian order to which I referred earlier becomes not only relevant but essential to our common future.

It must be recognised that the problem is not one of ethics versus politics, but rather one of developing the kind of politics which allow ethical considerations to be observed. Likewise, it must be recognised that humanitarianism is no longer just a matter of good heart but rather of "enlightened self-interest." This is why for the sake of good governance, I have long called for a remodelling of policies which ensure the promotion of "politics where people matter," or anthropopolitics, if you will.

Anthropopolitical activity must begin with a sober consideration of the underlying self-interest that will persuade actors such as states, multinational corporations and the world's media to accept the precepts of common humanity and to respect universal ethical standards.

Already, it is possible to hear voices speaking in these terms. In this country (Britain) it was greatly encouraging to hear

both the new prime minister and the new foreign secretary speak of the importance of ethics — not only before but also after the general elections.

I firmly believe that the world's religions have an important part to play in bringing an ethical and a humanitarian dimension to the search for solutions to our global problems.

The great religions all teach the essential oneness of the human race. They are all grounded in a deep understanding of our inter-relatedness. At the same time, they all share a common ethic of basic human standards. What unites the world's faiths in this respect is far greater than what divides them. A universal ethic would provide a focus for consensus. It would articulate the necessary minimum of common values, standards and attitudes which could be affirmed by all.

Some might say that ideals have no relevance to the real world. I would like to assert the contrary. Indeed, they played no small part in helping end the cold war as did the subsequent Helsinki Process.

The Helsinki model, conceptually divided into inter-linked baskets of issues: culture, economy and security, if suitably adapted, could make an important contribution to ending conflict in other regions, such as my own. Already this model in essence, has been adopted by the Barcelona Declaration and is to be applied, to the Euro-Mediterranean region.

We must recommit ourselves to entrenching ethical standards in the international arena. I believe that international relations are in serious need of the commitment, energy and integrity which encouraged and informed the development of international law and the codification of common values as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Now as we prepare ourselves for the next century, we must ensure that those concepts and those human impulses which ensured our survival and well-being are nurtured and further strengthened. And in so doing, we must look positively on past failures as pitfalls whose avoidance is the precursor to future successes.

I believe there is a massive constituency for developing a universal idiom which recognises the aspirations of others and articulates an ethic of human solidarity. This alone can see us safely into the new millennium and ensure a better social milieu for future generations — a milieu that is regulated by the precepts of a civil society and safeguarded by good governance.

Somali warlords agree...

(Continued from page 1)

It was the third time the two leaders have agreed to a ceasefire, but the truces last October and on Jan. 20 broke down in the renewed clan fighting.

Mr. Aideed and Mr. Mohammed said they will invite other factions to start national reconciliation talks to end the civil war, which began after the ouster of the late dictator Mohammed Siad Barre and has left Somalia with no real government.

The war and a 1992 famine largely caused by the fighting have claimed more than 350,000 lives.

Mr. Mohammed and Mr. Aideed's late father, Mohammad Farrah Aideed, were the main rivals in the fighting which devastated the capital Mogadishu and left it divided among rival militias.

Mr. Hussein Aideed, who took over his clan's leadership after his father died last August, has been fighting the forces of Mr. Mohammed and a faction headed by Osman Hassan Ali, also known as Ato, who once was an ally of his father.

Mr. Aideed and Mr. Ali signed a separate ceasefire agreement in Yemen on May 8. The heaviest fighting

this year has been between their two factions.

Under the agreement reached Thursday, the green line dividing Mogadishu will be abolished and a joint administration will be set up to run the capital.

The signing of the accord came only one day after the Somali factions announced that they were putting off a reconciliation meeting sponsored by Ethiopia.

Regional and international mediation has failed in the past to end the turmoil in Somalia, with the faction leaders signing agreements only to violate them later.

Yemen keen to settle...

(Continued from page 1)

times since then, but its work is moving at snail's pace, diplomats say.

Yemen has hinted in recent months it might resort to international arbitration if more than a year of talks with Riyadh fail to settle the dispute.

Saudi Arabia and Yemen had several minor clashes in a border area potentially rich in oil and gas before they signed the deal.

Yemen's relations with Gulf Arab states,

including Saudi Arabia, have improved in the last few years. Sanaa angered its Gulf Arab neighbours when it appeared to side with Iraq during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis over Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

In December, the six-nation GCC turned down a Yemeni request to join the regional political and economic alliance which also groups Bahrain, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar.

U.N. attacked after vehicles...

(Continued from page 1)

southern village of Hariss in the U.N.-policed sector.

The guerrilla action against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), a 4,500-strong force from nine nations, is the first in 10 years, said a U.N. statement.

"UNIFIL strongly deplores this unwarranted aggressive behaviour," said a U.N. statement.

The U.N. zone in southern Lebanon abuts an Israeli-occupied border enclave and overlaps with the occupied sector in some areas. UNIFIL is highly

regarded in southern Lebanon for its aid to the local population during Israeli attacks.

UNIFIL said "irresponsible" media reports precipitated the attack on its peacekeepers.

The guerrilla action was apparently provoked by reports in the local media Thursday of U.N. vehicles turning up in the Israeli-occupied enclave.

The leftist Al Safir newspaper, quoting unidentified security sources, reported that Israeli forces were using similar transport vehicles as those of the peacekeepers.

It said there were fears the vehicles could be used for "sabotage operations" outside the occupied enclave.

Another UNIFIL officer, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said more than five vehicles belonging to the United Nations Disengagement and Observer Force in the Golan Heights were sold for scrap to an Israeli dealer.

The vehicles were resold to a junkyard in Marjayoun, the main town in the Israeli-occupied border strip in southern Lebanon, said the officer.

Palestinian, Jordanian businessmen want removal of Israeli impediments on trade

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanian and Palestinian businessmen Thursday blamed Israel for the weak flow of goods between the Kingdom and the Palestinian self-rule areas and said that steps should be taken to increase trade between Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

In a meeting that grouped businessmen from the two sides and held at the Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI), the businessmen agreed to form a six-man committee to oversee the expansion of trade relations and the holding of trade fairs in Amman and Palestine early next year.

ACI Chairman Khaldoun Abu Hassan who headed the Jordanian side during

the meeting, said the trade volume between Jordan and the PNA reached \$21 million in the first eight months of the last year compared with \$20 million in 1995.

Mr. Abu Hassan said the ACI figures show the PNA has exported \$18 million during the January-August period of 1996 compared with \$15 million during the same period of 1995. He added that the Kingdom's exports to the PNA amounted to \$3 million compared with \$5 million in 1995.

He said that Israeli security measures were responsible for the slow activity and stressed that Israel wanted to continue its monopoly of the Palestinian market which absorbs between \$2.7 billion and \$4 billion annually of Israeli-made products.

"Hindering the truck

loading process, imposing intense security measures and levying heavy customs duties are major problems that delay the flow of goods," said Mohammad Qadwa, chairman of the Gaza Chamber of Trade and head of the Palestinian team that arrived here last week to attend the Jordan Industries Fair.

Palestinian participants in the meeting said the Israeli side delays issuing import permits of goods from Jordan for several months and refuses to issue permits if a certain product is available in Israel to compel Palestinian importers to deal with them.

Palestinian businessmen implicitly criticised the Jordan-Israel trade agreement, which allows only 52 trucks to transfer goods between Jordan and the

Palestinian self-rule areas and called for increasing the number as the 52 trucks mainly carry Jordanian cement to the PNA areas.

Mou'ad Nabulsi, a Palestinian businessman, told the Jordan Times that the two sides have approved holding trade fairs next year in Amman and in a Palestinian city that has not been decided yet.

He said that the fair in Palestine will also include Arab businessmen who will take part in a round discussion on Palestinian economy.

The Palestinian and Jordanian businessmen called for creating a free zone at the border. Such a zone is included in the Jordanian-Palestinian trade protocol but not implemented because of Israeli objections.

Iraq prepares to import Syrian products 'without affecting economic ties with Jordan'

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In a positive signal towards the normalisation of ties, a top Iraqi businessman said Thursday that Syria and Iraq will open the borders and that an Iraqi trade delegation will head to Damascus next month to discuss an Iraqi plan to import goods from its western neighbour.

But Adnan Qudsi, head of Iraq's Chamber of Industry, said that any trade deal with Syria will not affect the economic ties between his country and Jordan.

Mr. Qudsi's comments followed a visit this month by a Syrian delegation, headed by Ratiab Shalah, head of Syria's Chambers of Trade to Baghdad where he met with Iraqi Trade and Industry ministers Mohammed Mahdi Saleh and Adnan Abdul Majid.

"Our Syrian brothers told us that they were ready to open borders between the two countries and we told them that we were ready for a reciprocal step," Mr. Qudsi told reporters Thursday following a meeting with Khaldoun Abu Hassan, head of the Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI).

"They (Syrians) also invited us to visit Damas-

cus. We have accepted their invitation and a trade team (headed by Mr. Qudsi) will travel to Syria early next month," said Mr. Qudsi, who arrived here Monday to attend the Jordan Industries Fair.

A businessman who visited Baghdad with the Syrian delegation, told the Jordan Times that the coming days "will bring good news with regard to Syria — Iraq trade relations."

The businessman, who arrived here to attend Amman Industries Fair and spoke on condition of anonymity, said that the two countries will reopen the Abu Al-Sbamat border point, closed since 1979, and will start a new chapter in trade relations. He did not elaborate.

Asked if the invitation and the opening of the borders carry any political indication, Mr. Qudsi said: "When a (Syrian) trade delegation travels to Iraq through a border that is officially closed, that means the Syrian government is supporting such a step. Naturally when economic operations start, they should be followed by a political change. The political step usually follows the economic step."

Mr. Qudsi said that the Iraqi decision to accept the Syrian proposals came "in line with President Saddam

Husseini's instructions to improve ties with our Arab neighbours without exceptions."

He stressed that Iraq's trade relations with Jordan will not be affected by Baghdad's decision to import from Syria.

"We don't accept that trade deals with any Arab country be at the expense of Jordan. Jordan is the back bone of Iraq and our relations have continued despite the sanctions. Jordan has suffered from the unjust embargo," he stressed.

"But there are certain products, such as wheat, that are not produced by any Arab country except Syria," he said, adding that Iraq imports wheat from Australia and other foreign countries we prefer to purchase it from Syria. Therefore we shall discuss with our Syrian brothers supplying Iraq with some types of goods during our visit," the businessman said.

Mr. Qudsi said that Iraq is ready to normalise ties and trade with all Arab Gulf states without exception, including Kuwait.

"We want to trade with all Gulf countries including Kuwait. We have nothing against them. The imperialist states want to blackmail these countries. Our brothers should know

that what happened should be left behind and that we want to open a new page in our relations," Mr. Qudsi emphasised.

He said that if sanctions are lifted, all Arab states will prosper because Iraq will be ready to absorb all Arab-made products.

"Iraq is like a large ship that is ready to absorb all the products of Arab markets. The Jordanian market will prosper, the Syrian and Egyptian as well," Mr. Qudsi said.

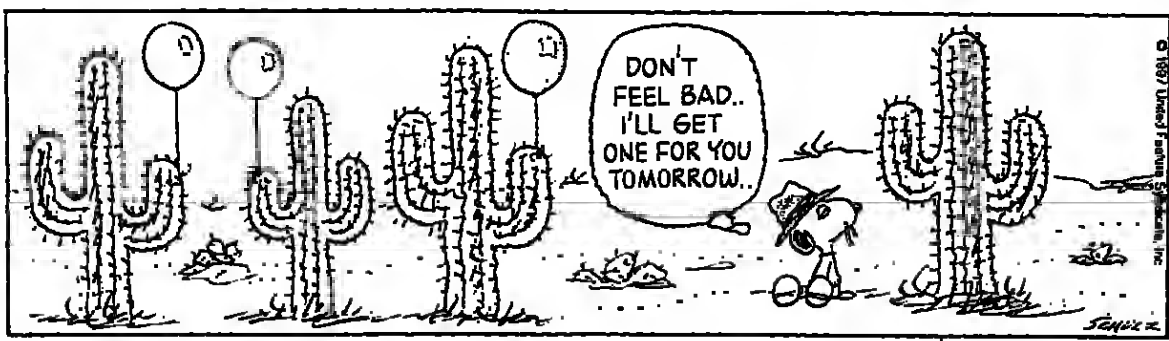
Before the 1990 Gulf war, Iraq imported \$20 billion of goods from foreign countries, including Arab states.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi trade delegation which held talks with a Jordanian team has complained about the introduction of a new tax on Iraq-bound goods at the port of Aqaba.

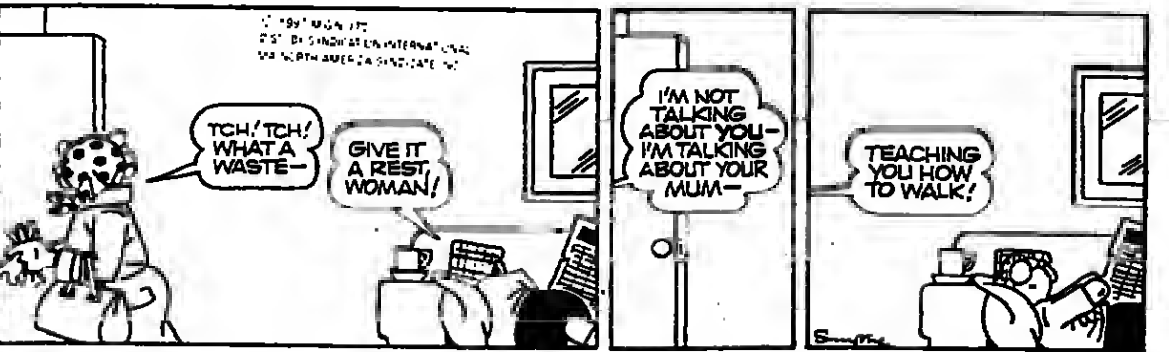
The Jordanian industrial team said that they will discuss the issue with government officials.

The Jordanian team, headed by Khaldoun Abu Hassan, informed their Iraqi counterparts that they will lobby the government to request the United Nations to operate humanitarian flights from Amman to Baghdad to transport Iraqi who need treatment in Jordanian hospitals.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7088	0.6110	1.4193	116.37	1.3705	1601.60	1.9200	5.7675
DE Mark	0.5839	-	0.3876	0.8286	63.20	0.8068	890.96	1.1249	3.3793
GB Sterling	1.6366	2.7945	-	2.3160	196.30	2.2577	2770.18	3.1442	4.0448
CH Franc	0.7065	1.2052	0.4311	-	82.15	0.9750	1195.31	135.65	4.0719
JP Yen	0.0088	1.4665	0.5345	1.2160	-	1.1864	14.55	164.97	4.9549
CA Dollar	0.7249	1.2327	0.4447	1.0262	1.19	-	1214.82	1.3862	4.1603
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0677	0.3604	0.0836	1457.94	0.8143	-	11.34	3.4047
NL Guilder	0.3208	58.87	0.3178	73.70	60.54	0.7181	881.57	-	3.0023
FR Franc	0.1734	0.2958	0.1058	24.5282	20.16	0.2383	33.28	33.2800	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	UD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LEB	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7080	3.7504	0.3770	3.5402	0.3023	3.6726	1637.00	3.3895
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	-	5.2972	0.5325	5.1415	0.4270	5.1873	2170.99	4.7874
GB Sterling	0.2866	0.1888	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0806	0.98	409.62	0.9038
Bahrain Dinar	2.85	1.8761	9.9485	-	9.66	0.8010	9.74	4077.14	8.9911
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	1.9429	1.0363	1.0363	-	0.8030	1.01	422.23	0.9311
Kuwait Dinar	3.3080	2.3420	12.4062	1.3470	12.04	-	12.15	5084.35	0.9311
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0212	1.0208	0.9912	0.0823	-	418.50	0.9229
Lebanese/1000	0.85	0.4808	2.4401	0.2453	2.3884	0.1967	2.3895	-	2.2052
Egyptian	0.2850	0.2089	1.1065	0.1112	1.0740	0.0892	1.0835	453.47	-

Energy									
Oil	Last	Revised							
Brent	19.85	19.85							
W. Texas	21.00	21.10							
Bonny	19.85	19.85							
Dubai	19.10	19.05							
UL Gas	205.00	203.00							

Metal Prices									
Metal	Spot	Offer							
Gold (oz's)	344.4	344.6							
Silver (oz's)	4.74	4.76							
Platinum (oz's)	402.5	406.5							
AL (3 Months)	1627	1628							
CU (3 Months)	2542	2544							
Zinc (3 Months)	1348	1348.5							
Lead (3 Months)	634	636							
NI (3 Months)	7220	7230							

Main Equity Indices									
Source	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr	Chg	Pr
New York	DOW JONES	7301.85	-38.33	-0.53	7327.61	7241.78	7330.18	-	-
New York	S&P 500	841.78	-2.3	-0.27	844.08	831.87	844.08	-	-
London	FT-SE 100	4621.2	-51.1	-1.08	4684.2	4595.9	4672.3	-	-
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	20068.81	-243.42	-1.2	20390.4	20029.1	20312.2	-	-
Paris	CAC 40	2883.94	4.7	0.16	2885.35	2836.08	2879.24	-	-
Frankfurt	DAX	3547.84	-88.58	-2.44	3597.71	3546.12	3636.42	-	-

Energy			
Commodity	Last	Delivery	
Coffee (c/lbs)	323.5	Spot	
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1515	Spot	
Sugar (\$/ton)	331.7	Spot	
Wheat (\$/ton)	152	Spot	
Soya (c/lbs)	23.63	Spot	
Tea (slg/kg)	155	Spot	
Barley (\$/ton)	0	Spot	
Rice (\$/ton)	480	Spot	

* JOD Cross Rates			
Currency	Buy	Sell	
US Dollar	0.708	0.710	
GB Sterling	1.1578	1.1636	
DE Mark	0.4155	0.4178	
CH Franc	0.5	0.5025	
FR Franc	0.1232	0.1238	
JP Yen	0.6095	0.6125	
NL Guilder	0.3682	0.371	
IL Lira	0.4188	0.4209	

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- Spar
- Bluenose
- Illicit exam aid
- Eight pref.
- Art supporter
- Tip-top
- Louisiana Purchase president
- With it
- Prepared
- Article of food
- Perform
- Become tawny
- "Oklahoma" composer
- Desire
- "to Live" (O'Hara novel)
- Tibetan gazelle
- Chest for valuables
- Author Nin
- Inland Asian sea
- Large body of water
- Dries
- Religious group
- English monarch
- DDE's command
- Bauble
- Islamic deity
- Conceptions
- Steward
- 17A, 25A, and 42A, informally
- Leo's haido
- Gabler or Hopper
- Average
- Scent
- Attempt
- Window section

by Matthew Higgins

Friday's Puzzle solved:

P	L	E	A	O	R	C	A	H	E	M	E	N
A	I	L	S	C	A	R	O	O	X	I	O	E
S	N	A	K	E	E	Y	E	S	G	O	N	G
T	E	N	A	L	S	O	C	A	D	G	E	S
E	N	D	U	R	O	N	E	H	R	O		
L	E	T	S	C	A	T	S	P	A	W		
H	O	U	N	D	S	T	O	O	T	H	E	L
E	L	S	A	A	W	L						
A	E	C	H	O	R	S	E	S	M	O	U	T
D	O	G	F	A	C	E	S	P	A	R		
O	C	H	R	E								
S	H	A	R	K	S	E	G	A	D	E	I	N
L	O	C	K	E								
I	N	N	E	R								
D	E	E	D	S								
S	E	T	S									
N	E	E	R									

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- DOWN
- Butterfly kin
 - Dull pain
 - Halt
 - Beret
 - Spanish coin
 - Indian prince: var.
 - Previously owned
 - Challenge
 - Sprite
 - Showing concern
 - Parks, for one
 - Privy to
 - Bow
 - Curved masonry
 - Dodge
 - Judicial proceedings
 - Clothing
 - Street show
 - Peruvian of yore
 - Western farm
 - Duck's mate
 - Rear
 - White heron
 - Bug
 - Cure
 - Bathe
 - Self pref.
 - Cinereous
 - 1A: anentary tales
 - Schoolbook
 - Call — (stop working)
 - Mild oath
 - Air pref.
 - Burden
 - Alphabet run
 - Turner and others
 - Fathers
 - "...mustn't — sentence with
 - Type of code
 - Tarkenton
 - Actress Daly
 - Guevara
 - Current unit

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, MAY 31, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson,
Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This is a good day today to get into new career activities which have the ability to make your endeavours more successful. If at all possible, postpone an obligation to a more propitious time. Drive very carefully.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Don't allow a fellow associate disrupt your schedule today or you won't be successful. Try some new activities with your mate later this evening and create more harmony at home for those who are under your roof.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Study a matter today with a fellow associate from a new angle, and you can get much better results. Don't allow any disturbing situation show you down from obtaining the success which you have been searching for.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You should not allow a silly distraction keep you from attaining your wishes. An interesting new friend can be very helpful with career activities, if you are so inclined to discuss the situation with him or her.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Don't get yourself into a huff over a difficulty at home today or you could make things worse. Be sure you don't take any risks where your reputation is concerned later tonight, or there will be those who won't trust you.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Steer clear of a communication which could cause you difficulties, however, be sure you keep any promises you have made. Drive carefully on the highway and thereby reduce and difficult situations in the days ahead.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You can please a dynamic new fellow associate, however, avoid getting involved in money schemes of any sort. You should not start any property repairs, until a more appropriate time, so simply be patient until then.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Try to operate more harmoniously with your fellow associates and thereby eliminating any difficulties. This is a good day today to start a plan of action which will improve your health considerably and make you look good.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You should not allow a personal concern annoy you to the point of ruining your day. Get into some new creative activity with your mate and you can make him or her feel an important part of your operation.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Steer clear of an acquaintance who is always demanding or there could be some difficulties developing. Today is a good time to invite those guests in who you've been waiting to entertain and would have a good time.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Keep your distance from someone today who wants to run your life or you could find yourself in a difficult situation. Show your superiors that you are efficient and capable in your duties and thereby become quite successful.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You'll have a fine opportunity today for adding to your income, so don't go flying off on any crazy tangent. Attend to any financial difficulties which you encounter in your career activities and that may deter your success.

Birthstone of May: Emerald — Citrine

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Planning minister: Economic growth should reflect positively on people's living standard

**** ALTHOUGH THE** rate of poverty in Jordan is 21 per cent and is widespread, it is not acute and, consequently it can be remedied through several means, Planning Minister Rima Khalaf told a gathering of political, cultural and media activists at the residence of Mohammad Khair Kilani Wednesday night.

She said that poverty is not something new in the Jordanian society as poverty was widespread during the 40s and the 50s. The situation differed during the exceptional growth period between 1975 and 1982 but the things deteriorated again in the late 80s, the minister indicated.

"All the high growth rates and the announcement by the government of improved economic results are meaningless as long as poverty and unemployment remain," she pointed out.

The minister explained that "the economic growth sought by any country is not a numerical growth but progress that reflects positively on the living standard of the people."

She stressed that there are many variables that should be taken into consideration in addition to the growth rates if the sought growth is the improvement in the living standard.

The most important of such measures would be to examine the results of this growth, she pointed out. "Is it being spread fairly among the various segments of the society and is there any improvement in the people's standard of living?"

Referring to poverty, Mrs. Khalaf said that per capita income in the early 80s was the equivalent of \$2,000 per year. The amount dropped to \$1,000 after the 1989 Gulf crisis before rising again in the early 90s to \$1,540 a year.

Mrs. Khalaf explained that despite the high per capita income in the early 80s, nearly 30 per cent of the accessible income was not generated from our own productivity but was provided from transfers and grants from abroad.

As such, the income of that period did not reflect our capabilities to enjoy a high standard of living, she said. "Now, nearly 92 per cent of our accessible income is generated from our work and that is a positive aspect that emphasises our progress to rely on ourselves," she added.

Noting that the rate of unemployment is 14 per cent, Mrs. Khalaf spoke of the social safety net pointing out that the main objective is to eliminate the factors leading to poverty by boosting productivity and raising the individual's potential to work through rehabilitation programmes.

She clarified that the outcome of these measures would not materialise except in the long term. "Consequently, it has been imperative to tackle the aspects of poverty and lessen its impact on the society in a transitional stage," the minister said.

Mrs. Khalaf indicated that the poor were classified in three categories: (1) those who do not and are not able to work, (2) those who do not but are able to work and (3) those who work but their income is not enough. She said that the number of those in the third category was large (Al Dustour).

Trading at AFM leaps to JD7.2m

AMMAN (J.T.) — Foreign investment, the new securities and companies laws have been behind the rapid rise in the trade volume at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) during the past few weeks.

Sources said Monday that foreign investment was behind last week's sudden leap in trade volume reaching JD2,396,239 as 645,776 shares were traded through 443 contracts.

The industry sector took up 80.65 per cent with 504,697 shares worth JD1,932,586 changing hands Monday.

Of particular interest, the Jordan Cement Factories Company (JCFC) shares contributed to 60.42 per cent of trade volume and the price registered JD4.09, a new 12 month high, at the end of the week.

Prices of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) and the Arab Potash Company (APC) closed at JD5.75 and JD6.58 respectively.

Market sources said the current interest in the three companies namely: JCFC, JPMC and APC, may be due to ING Barings and UBS's recommendations earlier this month.


In general, the volume of trade at the AFM was JD7.2 million last week. The volume represents a 24.1 per cent increase from last week (JD5.8 million) as 3.7 million shares were traded through 3,174 contracts.

On a sectoral level, industry accounted for JD4.5 million (62.5 per cent) of the volume of trade, banking and finance took JD1.5 million (20.8 per cent), services contributed a million dinars (13.9 per cent) worth of trade and the insurance sector pitched in with JD200,000 (2.8 per cent).

The general index went up again this week from 155.86 to register a new high of 158.92 points.

On a sectoral level, industry swelled 3.83 points (3.12 per cent), banking and finance increased 2.13 points (1.1 per cent), services went up 2.15 points (1.95 per cent) and insurance also edged up by 0.53 points (0.47 per cent).

After comparing the prices of the 88 companies whose shares were traded, 36 companies registered increases, 28 decreased and the remaining 24 held steady.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET															
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN															
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179															
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (26/05/1997 - 28/05/1997)															
WEEKLY REPORT															
															
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS		COMPANY NAME	P/E	QTY	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	TURNOVER	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
HIGH	LOW														
259,000	595,000	ARAB BANK	11.8	1.57	29	1700	426500	256.00	258.00	255.00	255.50	-.50	256.98	.034	3
1,050	1,750	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	-	0.00	320	565911	727420	1.80	2.06	1.80	2.06	-.26	1.989	.871	6
5,040	6,500	CAIRO AMMAN BANK	11.4	2.13	3	12150	43355	5.00	5.50	5.00	5.50	-.50	5.151	.127	5
3,360	2,900	BANK OF JORDAN	6.9	0.00	16	9669	59609	2.00	2.11	2.01	2.10	-.10	2.062	.092	2
1,100	950	MTD. EAST INV. BK.	63.0	0.00	22	17839	18410	1.07	1.07	.97	1.02	-.05	1.032	.170	4
9,930	2,140	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	8.1	3.72	15	9081	6128	2.50	2.19	2.18	2.39	-.01	2.184	.028	6
6,950	6,660	THE JORDANIAN TEL.	14.7	3.84	71	22318	106862	4.28	4.95	4.17	4.32	-.14	4.870	.089	4
2,630	2,500	JOR. SECURITIES BANK	9.8	0.00	44	16442	44618	2.62	2.79	2.65	2.77	-.15	2.716	.144	4
.830	.790	JOR. GULF BANK	4.7	8.88	10	6034	6376	.80	.79	.78	.79	-.01	.789	.040	4
3,700	3,520	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	10.5	3.16	54	15246	54628	3.62	3.80	3.61	3.80	-.17	3.714	.105	4
1,240	1,250	DELTA DEV. INV. BK.	11.5	0.00	54	10456	12477	1.26	1.25	1.18	1.18	-.07	1.220	.047	3
3,390	3,170	JOR. EXPR. INV. BK.	10.5	0.00	8	5428	8262	2.17	2.20	2.17	2.17	-.03	2.170	.050	2
3,040	3,000	DETA. AL-MAL (BEITRA)	-	35.00	14	1635	2941	1.06	1.56	1.04	1.25	-.19	1.112	.132	4
3,340	3,010	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	-	0.00	5	700	733	1.12	1.12	1.10	1.32	-.22	1.110	.002	5
INDEX NUMBER: 1555377															
CHANGE: +1.18%															
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS															
HIGH	LOW	COMPANY NAME	P/E	QTY	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	TURNOVER	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
2,890	2,850	JORDAN INSURANCE	12.2	5.26	1	60000	142900	5.89	2.89	2.85	2.85	-.04	2.890	1.000	1
1,890	1,850	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	6.4	32.96	4	1500	3100	1.62	1.65	1.60	1.65	-.05	1.619	.064	1
3,950	3,820	JORDAN LIFE INSUR.	7.3	5.69	3	3000	9460	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	-.02	1.820	.140	2
5,410	5,410	ALHARIR AL-AMMAN	12.2	0.00	1	700	1120	9.41	9.40	9.40	9.40	-.01	9.400	.050	1
INDEX NUMBER: 1114.19															
CHANGE: +0.67%															
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS															
HIGH	LOW	COMPANY NAME	P/E	QTY	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	TURNOVER	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
1,630	1,550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	8.2	5.81	95	65878	307925	1.46	1.13	1.05	1.72	-.07	1.490	.426	4
8,000	8,000	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.5	0.00	5	15000	150000	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	-.00	8.000	.000	2
3,390	3,320	JOR. ELECTRICITY	8.4	3.93	9	500	696	1.39	1.49	1.39	1.49	-.10	1.410	.010	1
7,130	7,100	VEHICLES, OWNERS FND.	7.8	6.90	1	50	258	7.15	7.15	7.15	7.15	-.00	7.160	.000	1
5,700	6,400	ARAB TEL. MOBILE	18.2	3.26	5	1000	6645	9.70	9.45	9.46	9.96	-.50	9.644	.011	2
9,140	9,250	SEMPERPAR LINE	12.5	5.65	5	256	591	2.35	2.31	2.30	2.31	-.01	2.309	.004	1
1,190	.980	RAIL. PORTFOLIO	-	0.00	291	36740	294174	1.13	3.27	1.13	1.25	-.15	1.204	.695	6
7,760	6,900	ALMAA	12.4	7.25	6	2167	36969	3.00	7.00	6.90	6.90	-.10	6.908	.101	1
1,350	1,170	KNO. EAST HOTELS	19.5	0.00	16	5090	6448	1.33	1.32	1.28	1.28	-.05	1.286	.100	2
3,450	3,900	ARAB TEL. MOBILE	18.2	0.00	16	11170	36409	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	-.00	3.000	.000	1
1,000	.470	KANSA EDUCATION	-	0.00	19	33650	25870	.90	.99	.97	.98	-.02	.979	.551	6
1,690	1,630	UNIFIED CO.	8.0	6.51	15	5100	8597	1.69	1.69	1.67	1.69	-.02	1.684	.102	2
.700	.660	UNION LAMP DEV.	-	0.00	4	450	298	.67	.68	.65	.68	-.03	.662	.009	3
INDEX NUMBER: 112.55															
CHANGE: +1.96%															
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS															
HIGH	LOW	COMPANY NAME	P/E	QTY	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	TURNOVER	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
3,950	3,900	ATOMIC	-	0.00	17	10746	10396	.45	1.03	.90	1.03	-.05	.994	.110	1
3,940	3,700	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	27.5	5.49	258	659104	243651	2.92	4.10	2.91	4.09	-.17	2.994	1.084	6
3,500	3,050	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	10.4	2.67	70	128735	461713	3.50	2.75	3.50	3.75	-.25	3.585	.297	1
6,410	5,700	ARAB POTASH CO.	15.3	3.06	79	72800	479693	6.41	6.70	6.40	6.58	-.17	6.488	.911	6
9,490	9,500	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	10.4	2.67	25	5000	9220	3.50	3.75	3.50	3.75	-.25	3.585	.297	1
1,390	1,370	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	10.1	8.66	7	10750	11393	1.17	1.17	1.06	1.17	-.11	1.040	.076	2
1,970	1,700	INDUSTRIAL CORP. JOR.	-	0.00	34	8938	17732	1.81	7.02	1.81	1.47	-.04	1.984	.174	1
6,800	6,500	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	10.4	2.67	9	2350	16587	6.40	6.40	6.40	6.40	-.00	6.421	.059	1
3,120	3,440	ARAB PHOS. CHEM.	10.4	5.12	105	26179	10556	2.75	5.10	2.75	5.10	-.00	3.236	.149	6
7,500	6,750	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	6.9	3.95	1	400	2690	6.75	6.70	6.10	6.70	-.05	6.700	.016	1
5,970	9,550	JORDAN DAIRY	7.8	10.63	2	500	640	7.25	2.30	2.30	9.30	-.05	7.300	.011	1
3,450	1,390	JOR. PIPES MANUFACT.	17.4	5.71	3	700	376	1.39	1.40	1.39	1.40	-.01	1.394	.017	1
2,400	2,340	JOR. PAPER MANUFACT.	11.0	0.00	1	100	75	2.35	2.75	2.35	2.75	-.40	2.500	.001	1
2,450	2,450	GENERAL AIRLINE	-	0.00	4	400	1702	2.46	2.13	1.99	2.20	-.29	2.172	.040	1
6,900	6,400	DAR ALMAA DEV. INV.	12.2	6.97	35	6500	50546	4.75	6.05	4.80	5.03	-.28	4.923	.103	4
3,390	3,350	ARAB AGRI. IND.	7.5	8.13	4	1400	6598	3.39	3.25	3.04	3.04	-.35	3.091	.021	2
.520	.900	ATOMIC	-	0.00	12	6000	2192	.50	.55	.50	.52	.02	.507	1.004	6
1,100	1,020	ARAB PAPER CORP. JOR.	31.8	0.00	25	3546	7866	1.05	1.05	1.03	1.04	-.01	1.040	.216	2
3,100	1,050	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	-	0.00	3	3000	5240	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	-.00	1.080	.075	1
.960	.520	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	-	0.00	41	21650	11707	.55	.56	.52	.56	-.04	.541	.161	3
.760	.700	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	10.4	2.67	12	3025	3732	.72	.72	.70	.72	-.02	.705	.074	3
.650	.400	JOR. ROCCOOL INDUS.	-	0.00	4	2600	1913	.62	.62	.60	.61	-.01	.605	.003	2
9,900	3,650	RAIL. CABLE REPAIR	45.1	0.00	15	3900	10816	2.70	2.81	2.48	2.81	-.33	2.773	.078	2
.700	.920	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	-	0.00	21	11340	6974	.67	.62	.61	.69	-.08	.615	.084	4
3,490	3,210	ARAB PHOS. CHEM.	10.4	6.70	65	27616	21556	1.43	1.49	1.41	1.49	-.08	1.469	.540	4
3,540	1,610	UNIV. JORD. INDUS.	55.4	.58	27	3500	10919	1.46	1.51	1.44	1.46	-.06	1.455	.550	1
1,190	1,320	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	15.3	8.77	65	22155	56269	1.15	1.15	1.13	1.16	-.03	1.124	.289	6
1,408	1,250	RAIL. CEMENT	12.8	6.78	17	16450	11019	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.40	-.00	1.410	.178	1
.890	.850	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	15.8	0.00	55	26530	39363	.86	.86	.86	.86	-.00	.860	.275	4
1,690	3,600	EL-KAY READY MEAR	16.8	0.00	14	4090	6595	1.60	1.58	1.52	1.52	-.06	1.563	.055	4
1,200	1,140	RAIL. TORONDO	6.3	0.00	65	46802	51130	1.16	1.16	1.15	1.15	-.01	1.161	.460	6
.920	.860	UNION C. R. PWD.	29.4	0.00	13	4250	5853	.88	.91	.87	.87	-.03	.898	.139	2
INDEX NUMBER: 126.95															
CHANGE: +1.51%															
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS															
HIGH	LOW	COMPANY NAME	P/E	QTY	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	TURNOVER	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
230.00	210.00	TOTAL	-	2328	2120690	6053241	1358.93	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.96%

Stockton 3-pointer puts Jazz into NBA final against Bulls

HOUSTON (R) — John Stockton's 3-pointer at the buzzer put the Utah Jazz into their first NBA finals ever with a 103-100 victory over the Houston Rockets Thursday.

Stockton took the inbound pass from Byron Russell behind a pick from Karl Malone and had a wide-open look from the top of the arc. Rockets forward Charles Barkley was too late coming over and Stockton's shot swished through at the buzzer.

"At the end of the game, it's easy for everyone to get hater-skelter," said the veteran point guard. "I thought everybody did what they were supposed to do."

"Byron made a great pass to me to get the ball to me quickly and I just got rid of it. I was free for a second and I felt comfortable shooting it."

"Coach said for us to set a pick on whoever was guarding Stockton," Malone said. "Clyde (Drexler) took him and I laid some good meat on him. It was the best pick I've ever set. Stockton made a great shot. It's the kind of shot that we'll remember for a long time."

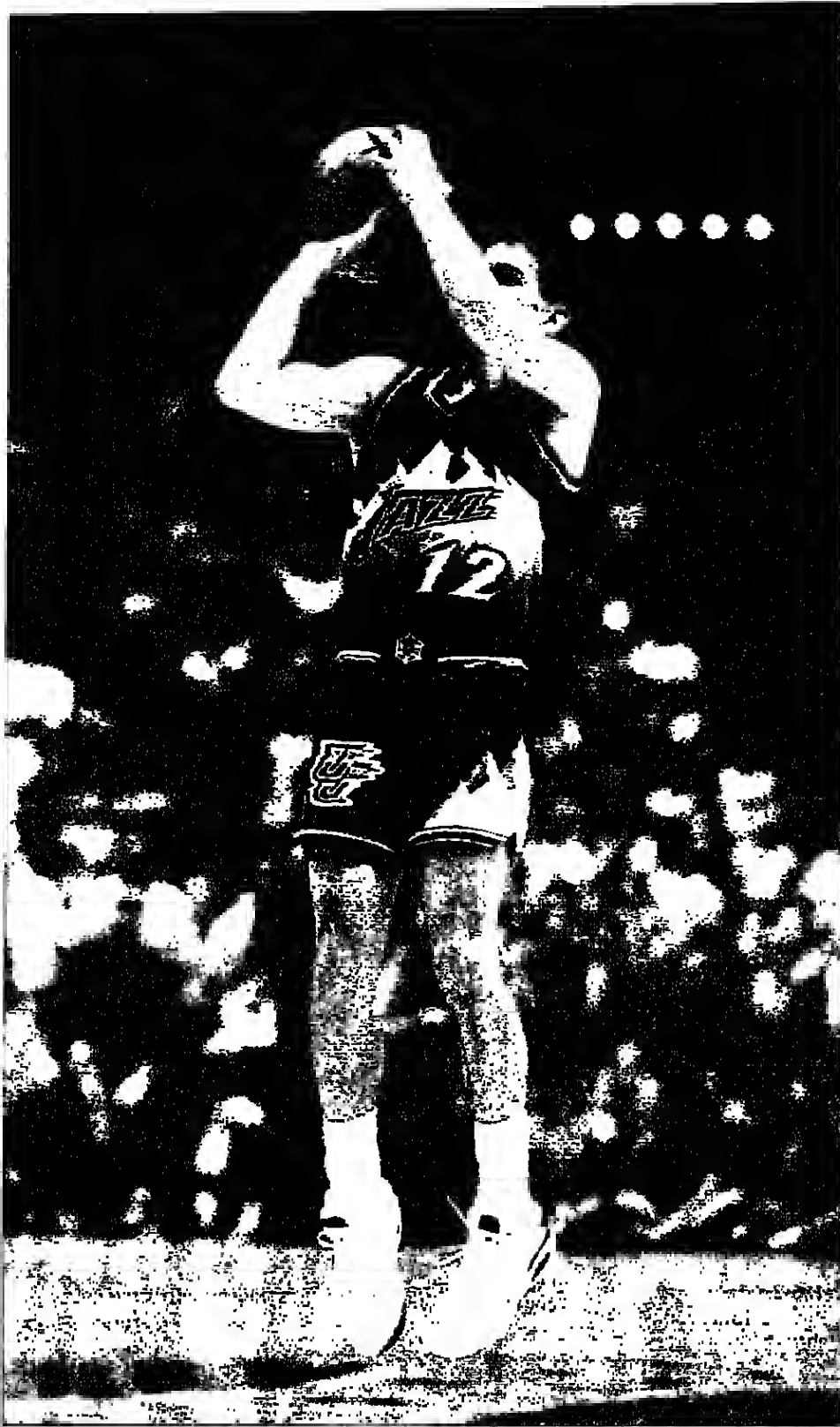
Stockton leaped in celebration with his fist in the air and was mobbed by his teammates as more than a decade of frustration for the Jazz came to an end. The stunned crowd fell silent as Rockets players walked off the court, their dreams of a third NBA title in four years ended.

"We were supposed to switch out and deny him (Stockton) the ball," Drexler said. "I was going over the pick and Malone just grabbed me. Stockton was able to get free and make the shot. The ref was right there on the play. He saw exactly what happened."

The Jazz won the Western Conference finals 4-2 and will play the defending champion Chicago Bulls for the NBA title beginning on Sunday. Utah reached the conference finals in four of the last six years but had never made the finals.

"This is unbelievable," said Malone. "What we've been through as a team. Everybody stuck together and believed in each other. It's awesome. It's totally awesome."

"These guys have worked very hard," Jazz coach Jerry Sloan said. "I'm very proud of them. They never gave



Utah Jazz guard John Stockton shoots the game-winning three pointer at the buzzer to beat the Houston Rockets 103-100 in the Western Conference finals in Houston. The Jazz will meet the Chicago Bulls in the NBA finals (Reuters photo)

up. They've been criticised because they haven't had the chance to go to the finals, but now we are. They deserve the opportunity. It's a wonderful thing."

Stockton's shot capped a stunning rally by the Jazz, who trailed by 13 points with less than seven minutes to play. Stockton scored 15 of his 25 points in the fourth quarter, including Utah's last nine in the final 83 seconds.

He also had 13 assists and helped hold Rockets guard Matt Maloney scoreless on 0-of-6 shooting.

"We knew we weren't out of it," said Stockton. "We knew our guys wouldn't give up. Nobody gave up."

Thursday's playoff result
Western Conference finals
Utah 103 Houston 100
(Utah wins best-of-seven series 4-2)

Wednesday's playoff result
Eastern Conference finals
Chicago 100 Miami 87
(Chicago wins best-of-seven series 4-1)

was the best player in the series and the best player tonight. He scored the last points. That's awesome. He finished the way a star should finish it off.

"He made the plays to get the Jazz to the finals, plain and simple."

Malone had 24 points and 11 rebounds and Jeff Hornacek added 18 for the Jazz, who won a Conference finals road game for just the second time in 13 tries. Utah lost to Portland in 1992, Houston in 1994 and Seattle last year in previous Western finals.

Drexler scored a playoff season-high 33 points and Barkley added 20 for the rockets, who had been 9-1 in elimination games since 1994. Houston ousted Utah en route to titles in 1994 and 1995.

"The better team won this series," Barkley said. "They were the best team in the West all season. There's a reason why they won 64 games during the regular season."

Two free throws by Barkley had given Houston a seemingly safe 98-91 lead but Russell made a 3-pointer with 1:50 to play and Stockton scored on a drive, forced a turnover by Hakeem Olajuwon and drove for another hoop to tie the game with 1:03 left.

"We were down 12 in the fourth quarter and then all of a sudden it's five and they call a time-out," Hornacek said. "I think that's when we knew we could win it. We had the luxury of a seventh game but they didn't."

Barkley was fouled after an offensive rebound and his foul shots gave the Rockets a 100-98 edge with 32 seconds remaining.

But Stockton answered 10 seconds later with a tough shot in the lane and Drexler missed a tough driving bank shot. Malone grabbed the rebound and called time with 2.8 seconds to go, setting up Stockton's game-winning shot.

Russell contributed 16 points for Utah, which shot 48.5 per cent (40-of-82) from the field and held a 39-35 edge in rebounds.

Olajuwon had 16 points — none in the fourth quarter — and 11 rebounds and Mario Elie added 11 points for Houston, which shot 50 per cent (36-of-72). Olajuwon also had six blocked shots.

"This was a game we could have won but we made a lot of mistakes at the end and our execution wasn't there," Olajuwon said. "It was not meant to be."

Speed kings Bailey and Johnson ready to slug it out

TORONTO (AFP) — Either Canada's Donovan Bailey or American Michael Johnson will be \$1.5 million richer this Sunday when they race over 150 metres for the unofficial title of the world's fastest man.

The two men meet at Toronto's Skydome before what is expected to be a sell-out crowd and hundreds of millions of television viewers around the world.

Bailey is the Olympic 100 metres champion and world record holder; Johnson is the Olympic 200 metres champion and world record holder.

Traditionally, the 100-metre winner is accorded the unofficial title of "world's fastest man," but traditionally the Olympics 100 metres gold goes to an American.

Much to the ire of Canadian sports fans, American television commentators suggested at Atlanta that the fastest man was the 200 metres winner, not least because he absolutely obliterated the 200 world record in the final.

The stage was set for the promoters and agents to enter the scene.

Giselle Briden, a 29-year-old entrepreneur from Ottawa, was the unlikely winner to be promoter of one of the most hyped events in athletics.

It's not just a Canada v USA battle; sports manufacturers Nike (Johnson) and Adidas (Bailey) are also putting their reputations on the line.

Although Bailey is now based in Texas, it appears to have done nothing to improve his relations with Johnson, a Texan.

Bailey was obviously irked at the suggestion by the U.S. commentators that he was not the fastest man and has made several comments suggesting that the Americans didn't know what they were talking about.

And that reaction has outraged Johnson who retorted: "I respect him (Bailey) as an athlete. I don't respect him as a man who claims to be a fair man."

"He has done some things I think are contrary to that ... training in the United States under an American coach and calling American people ignorant."

"I think it shows his immaturity in the sport. You've got to give more than one

good race, you've got to have more than two good years."

Bailey insists that, whatever the outcome of this Sunday's 150-metre race, he will still be the fastest man in the world.

The 150-metre race will be run on a 75-metre curve and a 75-metre straight in Toronto's Skydome Stadium.

The International Amateur Athletics Federation refuses to recognise the 150 metres for the record books, but it has sanctioned this Sunday's world's fastest man race.

The best outdoor time for the distance is 14.8 seconds, recorded by Italy's Pietro Mennea at Cassino on May 25, 1983; the best indoor time is 14.93, recorded by Britain's John Regis at Stuttgart on August 20, 1993.

It is still unclear whether the Skydome event will be classified as indoor or outdoor.

Usually used as a baseball stadium for the Toronto Maple Leafs, the Skydome closes its roof in bad weather, turning it from an open-air stadium to an indoor one.

While all eyes will be on the main event Sunday, the organisers were hoping for a general athletics extravaganza.

But some of the "undercard" performers have had to back out.

Olympic 100-metre sprint champion Gail Devers of the United States was supposed to compete in the women's hurdles race, has withdrawn because of a calf injury; she will be replaced in Sunday's race by world indoor champion Michelle Freeman of Jamaica in the race against Olympic hurdles champion Ludmila Enquist.

Pole vaulter Sergei Bubka of Ukraine is suffering from an Achilles tendon injury and will be replaced by U.S. record holder Lawrence Johnson.

And Sweden's Patrick Sjöberg is replacing injured Cuban high jumper Javier Sotomayor who has decided to delay his comeback until later this year.



Iceland's top handball player Julian Duranona (13) struggles with the ball against Spanish Jesus Olalla (8) during their match of the men's World Handball Championship in Kumamoto May 30. Iceland beat Spain 32-23 (Reuters photo)

Pippen day-to-day after test of injured foot

CHICAGO (R) — Chicago Bulls All-Star forward Scottie Pippen was listed as day-to-day after undergoing test Thursday that revealed no structural damage to his sprained left foot.

Pippen had a Magnetic Resonance Imaging test (MRI) after suffering the injury in the first quarter of the 100-87 victory over the Miami Heat Wednesday that put the defending champions in the NBA finals for the fifth time in seven years.

A Bulls spokesman said the MRI revealed no fractures or torn tendons, adding that Pippen would be at practice Friday and might participate following an evaluation by team doctors.

After suffering the injury, Pippen went to the locker room for X-rays, which were

negative. He said he felt better as the night went on and repeatedly asked coach Phil Jackson and general manager Jerry Krause for permission to re-enter the game.

"There was a spot that was tender and Scottie said he felt better as the night went on," Jackson said after the game.

The Bulls now face the Utah Jazz, the winner of the Western Conference against the Houston Rockets (see separate story).

The 31-year-old Pippen is a seven-time All-Star who played on the 1992 and 1996 Olympic teams. He is averaging 18.9 points, 6.1 rebounds and 3.9 assists per game in the playoffs.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TANNIAH HIRSCH
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RIGHT WAY, WRONG WAY

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ A 8 2
♥ 9 5
♦ 7 3
♣ J 9 5 2

WEST
♠ Q 8 7 3
♥ Q 10 6 5
♦ Q J 9 8
♣ 6

EAST
♠ J 8 4
♥ 9 7 3
♦ 10 6 4
♣ A 10 7 3

SOUTH
♠ K 10 5
♥ A K J 4
♦ A K 2
♣ K 8 4

The bidding:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1NT Pass 3NT Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♠
Be wary when shown a holding in just one suit and being asked how you would play it. Consider the club suit in the diagram. If there are entries to both hands, it is slightly better to lead low toward the two honors first. That will enable you to hold your losers in the suit to one trick should West have been dealt any four clubs. But is that the right play here?

The auction is simply a matter of arithmetic. In the modern style,

South's opening bid shows a good 20 to 22 points, and North has an easy raise to the no-trump game. West led the queen of diamonds, and declarer had no sound reason to refuse the first trick. A club to the jack was allowed to win, and a club to the king revealed the break. But now declarer could not score more than two club tricks, since East held two stoppers in the suit and there was only one entry to dummy. With the heart queen off-side, declarer had to settle for eight tricks.

Correct technique is to lead the king of clubs to the second trick. If it is captured by the ace, declarer will always be able to get three tricks in the suit, so East must allow the king to win. Now declarer leads the eight of clubs and, if West follows, declarer can afford to contribute an honor from dummy. That will produce four tricks in the suit if the suit splits 4-1 and West holds the length.

As the cards lie, West shows out and the eight is run to East's ten, but declarer is in control. Any return is won in the closed hand, and a club to the queen guarantees three tricks in the suit since the ace of spades is still on the table as an entry. Declarer makes the nine tricks that fate intended.

TODAY AT

CINEMA TEL:634144

PHILADELPHIA "1"

Pierce Brosnan &
Linda Hamilton ... in

DANTE'S PEAK

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:634144

PHILADELPHIA "2"

Jim Carie...in

THE MASK

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:699238

PLAZA

Interantional Star
Bross Willis in

Colour of Night

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

Top Disney production
101 DALMATIANS

Shows: 5:00

CINEMA TEL:677420

CONCORD

CONCORD "1"
Winner of 9 Oscars

THE ENGLISH PATIENT

Shows: 12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00

CONCORD "2"

Michael Jordan...in
SPACEJAM

Shows: 3:30, 6:00

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre
TEL: 625155

The actors are
on annual leave.
The theatre will
reopen July 2, 1997

Federation Shield controversy still unresolved, to be decided June 10

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times.

AMMAN — The fate of the final Federation Shield match grouping the country's two leading soccer teams, Al Wihdat and Al Faisali, will be decided during a meeting of the Jordan Soccer Federation's (JSF) general assembly next month, Al Wihdat chairman Bahjat Shihab said Friday.

Shihab said that the decision was taken during a JSF executive board meeting, headed by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah on Thursday in which the participants failed to solve the problem resulting from Al Faisali's demand to enlist foreign referees for their game against their all-time rivals.

Shihab said that a "problem" impeded reaching a decision on the match, which was scheduled to have been held May 26, but postponed with the hope that Thursday's meeting would solve the discord.

Shihab said that JSF's general assembly meeting will be held on June 10. He did not elaborate.

During Thursday's meeting, Al Faisali's

chairman Sultan Udwan insisted that foreign referees be enlisted with the approval of the general assembly. It was not immediately clear why he resorted to this step but the move is widely seen as the only way to amend current JSF regulations that stipulate that only Jordanian referees are to be run local matches.

News reports predicted Friday that the match will be played on June 20 adding that the general assembly will also discuss amending the JSF's regulation for 1997 soccer season.

A major article in the JSF instructions emphasise that if any club refuses to play the final match the club will be considered a loser with a 3-0 result.

While according to 1997 regulations Al Wihdat is the winner of the match, Al Wihdat have agreed to Al Faisali's demand — a fact that has angered the Jordanian referees committee which considers the demand as distrust of their capability to run major matches.

The JSF has requested the 10 soccer clubs in the Premier League to nominate its representatives to the June 10 meeting.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Baggio in doubt for France

ROME (R) — Milan's Roberto Baggio picked up a groin injury in a friendly match Thursday, putting him in doubt for a four-nation soccer tournament in France next week. Baggio's Milan club had no immediate details of the extent of his injury, which happened in a tackle, but he was expected to be out for Sunday's Serie A match against Cagliari.

The tournament involving Italy, Brazil, France and England starts runs from June 3 to 10. Italy are to announce their squad on Friday. Baggio, nicknamed the "diving ponytail", made a stunning return to the Italian national team against Poland a month ago. Called up as an afterthought, he came on as a second-half substitute and scored a superb goal, helping take Italy close to the 1998 world cup finals. Baggio, 30, had frosty relations with former Italy coach Arrigo Sacchi and had been off the team since September 1995, his only appearance since missing a penalty in the World Cup final against Brazil in Los Angeles in 1994.

Also Friday, defending champion Steffi Graf overcame a shaky start to advance to the fourth round of with a 7-6 (7-4), 6-1 victory over Magui Serna of Spain.

Graf, the No. 2 seed, looked sluggish in the first set and made 17 unforced errors, netting balls and often hitting long. But she recovered to win the tiebreaker with a couple of blazing forehand winners. She then rolled through the second set, 6-1.

Graf's first set against the 67th-ranked Serna took 53 minutes — one minute less than her entire second-round match.

In other action, the men's 15th seed, Marc Rosset of Switzerland, defeated Frenchman Lionel Rux in four sets, 6-3, 5-7, 6-2, 6-3.

On the women's side, 11th seed Amanda Coetzer of South Africa defeated Meike Babel of Germany, 6-4, 6-2.

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French Open

Muster crashes out; Graf, Rosset through

PARIS (AP) — In the first major upset of this year's French Open, former champion Thomas Muster was knocked out of the tournament Friday by the world's 66th-ranked player, Gustavo Kuerten of Brazil.

Kuerten defeated the fifth-seeded Austrian in five sets, 6-7 (3-7), 6-1, 6-3, 3-6, 6-4, to advance to the fourth round.

Muster was up 3-0 in the final set, but the Brazilian won six of the next seven games. The key break came in the ninth game when Kuerten hit a series of spectacular backhand winners to break Muster for 5-4. He then served out the match at love.

Muster, who dominated clay court tennis in 1995 and 1996, had struggled in his first two rounds here.

Also Friday, defending champion Steffi Graf overcame a shaky start to advance to the fourth round of with a 7-6 (7-4), 6-1 victory over Magui Serna of Spain.

Graf, the No. 2 seed, looked sluggish in the first set and made 17 unforced errors, netting balls and often hitting long.

But she recovered to win the tiebreaker with a couple of blazing forehand winners. She then rolled through the second set, 6-1.

Graf's first set against the 67th-ranked Serna took 53 minutes — one minute less than her entire second-round match.

In other action, the men's 15th seed, Marc Rosset of Switzerland, defeated Frenchman Lionel Rux in four sets, 6-3, 5-7, 6-2, 6-3.

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Marc Rosset of Switzerland heads the ball during his match against Lionel Rux of France in the French Open at Roland Garros stadium (Reuters photo)

6-3, 6-2.

For the women, Thursday was the day of the dreaded double fault.

For one young star, top-ranked Martina Hingis, it was a nervous double fault by an opponent that saved the day.

And for one rising star who isn't quite there yet, Venus Williams, it was a whole bunch of double faults that ended a trip to Paris.

Hingis, who had a close call in her second-round match against Italy's Gloria Pizzichini, acknowledged that if not for the key stumple by her opponent, things could have turned out a whole lot worse.

Pizzichini, the 75th-ranked player in the world, had won the first set and was a point away from 5-3 in the second when she double-faulted.

What if she hadn't, Hingis was asked later. "I think it wouldn't look too good after I would be down 5-3," the 16-year-old Swiss star said.

As for her reaction to the double-fault: "Thank God."

As often happens with a major stumble, it changed the momentum of the match. Hingis went on to win eight of the next nine games.

Hingis was keenly aware of how intimidating it can be to face the top-ranked player across the net.

"It helps sometimes if you're No. 1 in the world," she said.

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And her opponent was just as aware of what had happened.

"I was too afraid to win the match," she said, in a refreshing admission.

In Williams' case, sloppy mistakes were the rule in her match against Nathalie Tauziat of France. Both players committed 51 unforced errors.

But here too, the difference was in double faults. Williams, also 16 and playing in her first Grand Slam tournament, committed 13 of them to lose to Tauziat 5-7, 6-3, 7-5. The match ended on the 13th one.

Williams attributed her loss to "too many mistakes."

While Williams' exit took a marquee name out of the tournament, the women who were expected to win Thursday did.

The No. 3 seed, former champion Monica Seles, was admittedly not at her best but won, as did No. 6 seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario — also a former champion.

Mary Pierce, the No. 10 seed, Mary Joe Fernandez, No. 11, and Brenda Schultz-McCarthy, No. 14, all advanced.

On the men's side, No. 2 seed Michael Chang advanced in four sets over Jerome Golmard of France.

Marcelo Rios of Chile, the seventh seed, came from two sets down to overcome Zimbabwe's Byron Black 6-7 (7-3), 6-7 (7-0), 6-4, 7-6 (7-4), 6-0.

He also beat Black's brother, Wayne, in five sets in the first round.

Others who advanced were Albert Costa of Spain, seeded 11th, and his fellow Spaniard, 16th seed Sergi Bruguera.

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Burks lifts Rockies past Marlins

MIAMI (R) — Ellis Burks hit a two-out, two-run double off closer Robb Nen to cap a three-run ninth inning as the Colorado Rockies broke a 10-game losing streak in Florida with a 6-5 win over the Marlins Thursday.

Colorado's last win at Pro Player Stadium was on May 14, 1995.

Down 5-3 with two out in the ninth, the Rockies pulled within a run on Eric Young's RBI single to right field and completed their comeback with Burks' double into the left-center field gap. Nen (4-2), who blew his fourth save opportunity of the season, suffered the loss.

Israelis, Palestinians launch real-estate war in Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — A land rush is on in the Holy City, with the Palestinians and Israelis vying to buy up as much property as possible before negotiations begin on the future of the disputed capital.

People on both sides say the real-estate battle has raged via front companies and proxy buyers since Israel began building a major settlement in Arab east Jerusalem in March, plunging the peace process into crisis.

"This is a war in which, instead of firing, there is building," said Avitar Cohen, an official with Elaad, a private Israeli organisation which purchases Arab property in east Jerusalem's Old City.

Mr. Cohen and Palestinian officials said the aim was to purchase property and build housing at strategic locations around east Jerusalem in a bid to influence future negotiations over the status of the sector, which both peoples claim as their capital.

The conflict took on a new intensity when two Arabs accused of selling property to Jews in the Jerusalem area were found murdered this month.

The slayings came after Palestinian officials declared that Palestinians who sell land to Jews face the death penalty.

A senior Palestinian official in Jerusalem said Yasser Arafat's Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was actively purchasing land to block a feared Israeli

bid to build a ring of settlements that would cut east Jerusalem off from the West Bank.

"The Israelis are trying to connect Ras Al-Amud, the Mount of Olives and French Hill," the official said, referring to neighbourhoods in the north and east of the city. "To oppose this, we are purchasing property between these points and along main roads," the official told Agence France Presse (AFP) on condition he not be identified.

In addition, the PNA has gathered Arab funds from abroad to support Palestinian property purchases and renovations in east Jerusalem, which Israel occupied in 1967.

Interim peace accords with Israel bar the PNA from operating in east Jerusalem prior to the outcome of negotiations on the final status of occupied areas.

The Palestinians hope in the negotiations, due to be completed by May 1999, to make Jerusalem the capital of a future state.

Saudi Arabia has recently donated \$30 million for the restoration of Arab houses in the Old City's Muslim Quarter, the source said.

Arab businessmen in Jordan also set up last month a \$100-million joint investment fund to help finance construction by Palestinians who own land in Jerusalem but have little money to build on it.

On the Israeli side, two main organisations operating mostly with funds supplied by overseas Jews lead

the drive to purchase property in east Jerusalem.

An Israeli police official said the groups, Elaad and Ateret Cohanim, have already bought up dozens of homes in Arab areas of the city but have yet to move into them.

Ateret Cohanim has in recent months taken possession of at least three homes, each time sparking angry Palestinian opposition.

Mr. Cohen said Elaad intends to expand its control in the Silwan area east of the Old City where archaeologists say the original city of David was founded.

"We have 15 families living in the city of David now and five more will be placed there by the end of the summer," Mr. Cohen said.

"Next year we expect those numbers to grow by 30 or 40 per cent. That's not a hope, that's an expectation," he said.

Israeli Parliamentarian Benny Elon of the radical right-wing Moleket Party called Thursday for Israeli government intervention to halt PNA involvement in real-estate dealings in east Jerusalem.

"The Palestinians' new strategy has been to increase their investment and energy in buying lands in Jerusalem," Mr. Elon told AFP. "There is no Israeli body that is overseeing this or trying to prevent this."

An Israeli police spokeswoman said in response that police were acting to prevent PNA operations in Jerusalem, notably by security officials who oversee land dealings.



A Palestinian police officer rushes to help a Palestinian couple overcome by teargas after a gas-grenade fired by Israeli troops at stone-throwing Palestinians exploded in their living room on Friday. Clashes erupted when dozens of Palestinians attacked Israeli soldiers guarding a Jewish shrine on the outskirts of Bethlehem after a rally in memory of an Arab man who died in Israeli custody last week (Photo by Reuters)

Barak favourite to become new leader of Labour Party

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Former army chief Ehud Barak is almost sure to replace Shimon Peres as the new leader of Israel's Labour Party, according to a poll published on Friday.

Fifty-one per cent of Labour activists plan to vote for 54-year-old Mr. Barak in the leadership contest on Tuesday, they told the survey published in the daily Yediot Aharonot.

This puts Mr. Barak, who models himself on assassinated prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, way ahead of his three rivals in the race to lead the party.

Twenty-five per cent of those questioned by the survey said they would vote for the former Labour minister for the peace process, Yossi Beilin, while eight per cent support MP Shlomo Ben Ami and four per cent Ephraim Sneh.

Mr. Barak needs 40 per cent of the vote to win the contest outright in the first round, according to Labour party rules.

Around 200,000 party members will vote in Tuesday's election to replace Mr. Peres, who is stepping down after heading the party since the 1995 assassination of Rabin.

Mr. Peres led the party to defeat in national elections last year which swept right-wing Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu to power.

The new leader of Labour will prepare to handle Mr. Netanyahu in Israel's next elections in 2000.

Mr. Barak has had a spectacular rise in politics since joining the Labour Party in 1995 after 35 years in the army.

Unlike his mentor Rabin, Mr. Barak's commitment to the peace process with the Palestinians launched by Labour in 1993 remains unclear.

He backed a proposal adopted by the Labour Party this month removing its opposition to the creation of a Palestinian state.

But as interior minister under Rabin in September 1995, Mr. Barak abstained in a cabinet vote on an interim peace accord extending Palestinian self-rule on the West Bank.

In a stand similar to that of Mr. Netanyahu today, Mr. Barak said the accord failed to offer sufficient security for the 140,000 Jewish settlers living in the Palestinian territories.

British minister urges Arabs, Israel to show 'statesmanship'

BEIRUT (AP) — A senior British official wound up a regional tour in Beirut Thursday with a call on Arab and Israeli leaders to show "statesmanship" in an attempt to revive the stalled Middle East peace process.

Derek Fatchett, the minister of state at the British Foreign Office, arrived in Beirut overland from Damascus on the final leg of a Middle East tour.

The first official of the new Labour government to tour the region, Mr. Fatchett held talks with Lebanese leaders on ways to resume Arab-Israeli peace negotiations and also on expanding bilateral relations.

"What we need at the moment in the peace process is not detailed politics, but acts of statesmanship to move the process forward," he told reporters after meeting with Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Bwiz.

Mr. Fatchett, who had

also visited Jordan, Egypt, Israel and the Palestinian self-rule areas in the West Bank, said he will report back to his government on the results of his tour to assess "the chances for future progress."

Mr. Bwiz called for an "active" role by the European Union (EU) in the U.S.-sponsored Mideast peace process.

"We don't look at the European role as contradictory to the American role. Rather, it is complementary and supportive of this (U.S.) role," Mr. Bwiz said.

Mr. Fatchett met separately later in the evening with President Elias Hrawi and Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, and said Britain hopes to play an active role in the Middle East region.

Earlier Thursday in Damascus, Mr. Fatchett held talks with President Hafez Assad who reiterated Syria's commitment to comprehensive peace in

the Middle East and welcomed Europe's role in the peace process.

"Syria's option is a just and comprehensive peace to which it is committed," Mr. Assad told Mr. Fatchett.

Responding to an offer by Mr. Fatchett for Britain to take part in the peace process, Mr. Assad said "Syria has always called for a European active role."

The Middle East is embroiled in various disputes. The main one is over Jewish settlements being built by Israel in Arab east Jerusalem, which the Palestinians want to be their future capital.

The other problem is over Golan heights, which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 Middle East war. Israel wants to keep at least part of the strategic plateau for security reasons.

Troops massed on Sudan's eastern border

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Huge numbers of troops have massed on Sudan's border with Eritrea and Ethiopia for a possible new offensive against the east of Sudan, the independent Alwan daily reported Friday.

The daily, quoting eyewitnesses and travellers arriving from east Sudan, said the troops massed along the border with Sudan's Kassala, Al Qadaf and Red Sea states a week ago. It did not identify the soldiers. It said that Musa Hussein Dirar, a senior member of the parliament from east Sudan, had called on the government to "intensify general mobilisation among the people" in the face of a possible new offensive in the border areas.

Sudanese opponents of the Islamist regime in Khartoum united in the Democratic National Alliance began an offensive from the Eritrean-Ethiopian border and in the south of the country in January.

The reported troop concentration comes just days before a regional summit on the situation in Sudan is due to be held in the Kenyan capital Nairobi.

The organisation sponsoring the summit, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, groups Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, and Sudan. However the newspaper reported "prosecution" by Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi over whether to attend the meeting.

Islamic deputy probed for insulting Turkish secularists

ANKARA (AP) — A prosecutor Friday said he was investigating an Islamist party deputy for insulting the country's leaders.

The deputy, Sevkî Yilmaz, had called his fellow parliament members "pimps" and accused the "head of the country and parliament" of "betrayal." He also said that Turkey's laws violated Islam.

Mr. Yilmaz's statements came in speeches in 1990 and 1994 to supporters of his Islamic party, Welfare, which is the main partner in the governing coalition. The speeches came to light when they were broadcast Thursday night on a private television station.

Mr. Yilmaz could be charged with "insulting the state, its parliament and its officials," an offence punishable with up to two years imprisonment. Ankara's Chief Prosecutor İlhan Mesutoğlu announced.

Another prosecutor has filed an indictment seeking to ban the whole party for violating the constitutional principle that the Turkish state must remain secular.

The cases come in a continuing conflict between the party, which is seeking to increase Islam's presence in Turkey, and secular politicians and the military.

Parliamentary immunity protects Mr. Yilmaz, but it can be lifted by a majority vote in parliament.

Mr. Yilmaz said on Friday the whole affair was a plot by the media, upset by government plans to cut state subsidies.

Ministers from Welfare's coalition partner, centre-right True Path, reacted angrily to Mr. Yilmaz's comments in the speeches.

"Welfare has to discharge Mr. Yilmaz from the party immediately, or True Path needs to pull out from this coalition," Tourism Minister Bahattin Yücel said.

Iran's new president warned to stick to revolutionary path

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's President-Elect Mohammad Khatami was warned by Islamist hardliners on Friday not to stray from the principles of the Islamic revolution by pushing forward too many moderate policies.

Influential headline cleric Ahmad Jannati urged Mr. Khatami, who was elected with a landslide victory on May 23, to heed "first God, second the leader (Ayatollah Ali Khamenei) and then the demands of voters."

"The voters have different demands which should be realised within Islamic and revolutionary limitations," he said in a sermon before the weekly Friday Muslim prayers at Tehran University.

Mr. Jannati, who is the secretary of the powerful Council of Guardians, a conservative-dominated legislative body which ensures laws conform to the constitution and Islamic teachings, said the vote was an affirmation of the 1979 Islamic revolution and the Islamic establishment.

Mr. Khatami, who made more personal freedom, the rule of law and greater openness a main theme of his

campaign, scored a stunning victory against conservative Parliamentary Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri after the country's youth and women turned out massively in his favour.

A block of more Westernised Iranians, who are at ideological odds with the clergy and usually do not vote, were also instrumental in his victory as they voted for Mr. Khatami in the hope he would bring in a less restrictive society.

He will take office in early August, when President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani steps down after serving two consecutive four-year terms allowed under the constitution.

Since his election, Mr. Khatami himself has been careful not to alienate the conservative clergy, stressing his intentions to stick to the fundamental revolutionary principles, although promising more political diversity and freedom within the bounds of the constitution.

Hardline newspapers have also warned against any "unrealistic" expectation from Mr. Khatami. "The new

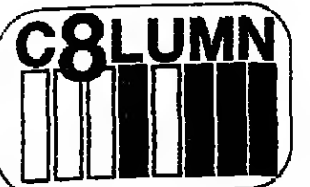
president's motto is adherence to the revolution and the Islamic Republic," said Kayban daily. "The ill-wishers now see that their dreams were nothing but an illusion," it warned. "The enemy is trying to provide an inverse picture of the events in Iran."

The fundamentalist Jomhuri Islami hailed participation in the election by the Westernised class, but described it as a belated move to sanction the Islamic Republic.

"The Islamic Republic had reached such an authority and maturity that even those who had distanced themselves from the revolution became interested and voiced their loyalty," it said.

The conservative Resalat warned Mr. Khatami's supporters against too much gloating in their victory or boasting as it "could lead to a spirit of revenge and excuses to hurt" the newly-elected candidate.

For example, MPs in the conservative-dominated parliament "could throw hurdles in his way in having his cabinet approved," it said.



US general relieved of duties for relationship with wife's nurse

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A U.S. general in charge of all army medical operations was relieved of his duties for maintaining an "improper relationship" with his ill wife's nurse, the New York Times said Friday. Investigators were unable to determine if Brigadier General Stephen Xenakis had an adulterous affair with the nurse, but they saw his car parked outside her home at all times, day and night, during their initial probe in August, military and congressional officials told the daily late Thursday.

Contraceptive tests drove elephants sex mad

LONDON (AFP) — Trials of a new contraceptive for elephants have had to be halted because they drove the animals wild for sex, it was reported Thursday. Last October scientists from the Institute for Zoo Biology and Wildlife Research in Berlin placed slow-release oestrogen implants modelled on the human contraceptive pill inside 10 elephant cows in South Africa's Kruger National Park, the New Scientist magazine said. The idea was to test birth control as an alternative to the culling programme which results in up to 600 elephants being killed each year. But the contraceptive oestrogen made the cow elephants appear to be permanently in heat, causing the bulls to go on a sexual rampage. "When we tracked them from the air, we would find a cow on her own surrounded by up to eight bulls. That sort of thing, we feel, is not the way we want to treat the elephants," Ian Whyte, the park's elephant specialist, told the magazine.

Man says he saw Hitler in Argentina after end of World War II

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — A 64-year-old carpenter says Adolf Hitler was alive and well in Argentina after the end of WORLD WAR II, contradicting history books that say he committed suicide in 1945. "I met Adolf Hitler in Argentina" Heron Ancin told a newspaper in the southwestern town of Neuquen. Ancin, who worked for the former president of Nazi Croatia Ante Pavelic, said he witnessed meetings between his then boss and Hitler as late as 1964 in the resort city of Mar Del Plata, 400 kilometres south of here. Pavelic immigrated to Argentina in the last years of the Third Reich. Hitler "would come with three bodyguards and his wife" to a building in Mar Del Plata owned by Pavelic, Ancin said. Official history says Hitler and his wife

Miami boy travels in style to Jamaica for free

MIAMI (R) — Dressed in a t-shirt and cut-off jeans, a 12-year-old boy walked through Miami airport security, boarded an American Airlines plane and flew first-class to Jamaica. The boy, had neither a ticket, money nor a passport. Now his mother, Darlene Livingstone, is seeking to sue American Airlines, the airport and U.S. Government agencies. "It is a very amusing yet dangerous story," lawyer Ellis Rubin told a news conference on Wednesday. "He didn't intend to fly," Rubin said. But he joined a passenger line and was ushered on board to a first-class seat on a Jamaica-bound flight. It was only when he landed and tried to get to a resort that he was found out and flown home. "I don't think he understands the seriousness. He thought it was a fun thing," his mother said.